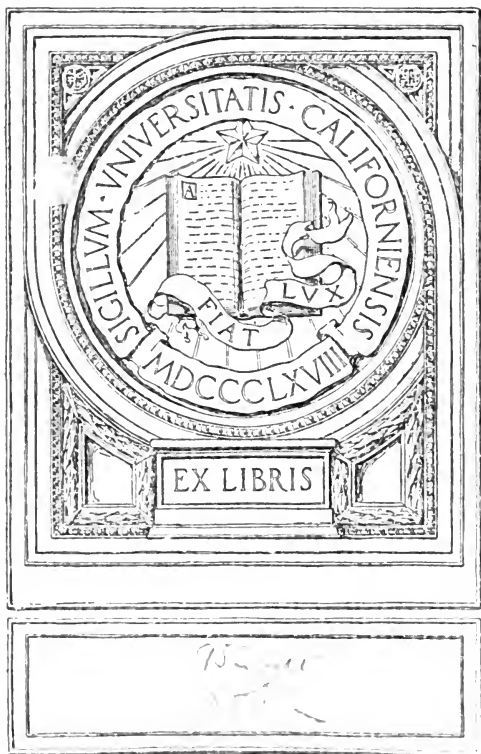


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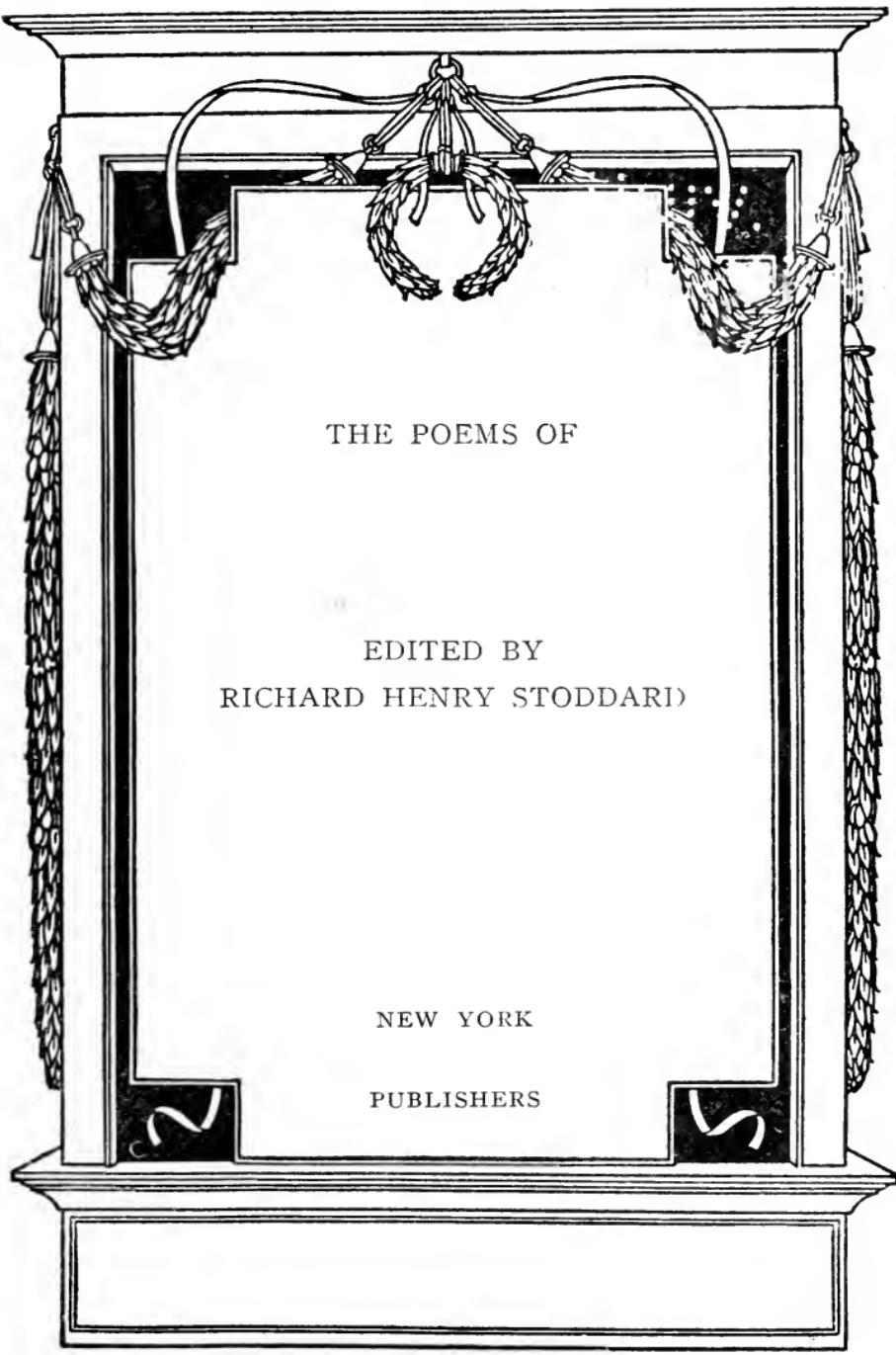


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THE POEMS OF

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INTRODUCTION.

IF the history of English poetry teaches us any thing, it teaches us that the succession of poets who have illustrated it since Chaucer is divided into two classes, one of which may be said to represent the characteristics of the periods wherein it flourished, while the other may be said to represent the characteristics of the line which it perpetuates. Belonging to the first class were the successors of Shakespeare, who was an evolution of the dramatic element of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the successors of Dryden, particularly Pope, who was an evolution of the satiric element of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the successors of Thomson, particularly Cowper and Wordsworth, who were an evolution of the nature-element of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are, of course, other elements than those I have indicated, in the verse of these poets and their followers, for no poet worthy of the name was ever content to play upon one string; but it was rather as evolutions of these elements that they rose to distinction, and are remembered now, than as intense individualities such as from time to time appear in religion, in philosophy, in politics, and in art, and found dynasties. The first of these powerful personalities in English poetry was Christopher Marlowe. Born two months before Shakespeare, the son of a shoemaker at Canterbury, nothing is known of his childhood or youth except that he was admitted to the King's School in his native city,

where he remained three or four years ; and that he was removed to Cambridge, where he became a member of Benet College, and was matriculated as pensioner shortly after the completion of his seventeenth year. Two years later he took the degree of A.B., and, four years later, that of A.M. He is believed to have owed his maintenance at college to some wealthy relative, or some patron whose favor he won by early indications of genius ; and it is plain, Dyce thinks, that he was educated with a view to one of the learned professions : most probably he was intended for the Church. But churchman he was not to be ; for, like Greene and Nash, who had preceded him, he made his way up to London, and became a player and a dramatist. Precisely when this occurred has not been ascertained : all that is certain is, that his first play, the first part of "Tamburlaine the Great," was performed at the Curtain before his twenty-third year.

The earliest flowering of the English drama, the germs of which must be sought in the rude interludes of Skelton and Heywood, was the "Gorboduc" of Sackville and Newton, which was played before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall, about two years anterior to the birth of Marlowe. The production of "Gorboduc" was an important event, partly because it was the first work written in English for scenic representation that deserved the name of a tragedy, but more because it was the first in which the rhyming quatrains, or couplets, of earlier playwrights were supplanted by the new measure, blank verse, which Lord Surrey had discovered more than twenty years before. Professing to deal with history, — for Gorboduc figures in the old chronicles as a king of Britain, — it was followed by a series of more or less historical plays, among which may be mentioned "Appius and Virginia," "Damon and Pythias," "Cambyses," "Marius and Sylla," "The Battle of Alcazar," "Edward I.," "Alphonsus, King of Arragon," and lastly "Tamburlaine the Great." If Marlowe went up to London, as he is supposed to have done, with the expectation of finding a larger field for the exercise of his talents there than at Cambridge, he went at the right time ; for never before nor since was the demand for such talents as he possessed so clamorous or so constant. It had been stimulated, if not created, by three or four

men like himself, one being Thomas Nash, who had been his contemporary at Cambridge ; another, Robert Greene, also a Cambridge man ; and a third, George Peele, who had taken the degree of M.A. at Oxford. They were authors, in that they wrote for their livelihood, and hack-writers, in that they wrote what the stationers wanted. Of the three, Greene was the most popular ; for he had a knack of scribbling stories that hit the taste of the time, and he could manufacture a play at a pinch when he had an order for one. They were loose and careless livers, rioting at taverns and ordinaries when a successful play or pamphlet put money in their purses, and skulking in out-of-the-way lodgings when their money was gone. The period was prolific in poets, of whom the most noted were Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, who, besides "*Gorboduc*," had written the Induction to "*The Mirror for Magistrates* ;" Edmund Spenser, who had written the "*Shepherd's Calendar* ;" William Warner, who had written "*Albion's England* ;" John Lyly, who had written "*Euphues*," and several court comedies ; George Gascoigne, who had written "*The Steel Glass*," and other poesies ; and George Whetstone, who had written "*Promos and Cassandra*," which was one day to be of use to Shakespeare in writing "*Measure for Measure*." It was to make his way among poets like these, whose works were no doubt known to him, that Marlowe went up to London ; and he made his way at once with "*Tamburlaine*," greatly to the dissatisfaction of Nash, — who, in his preliminary epistle to Greene's "*Menaphon*," satirized him and his measure, which he described as the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse, — as well as to the dissatisfaction of Greene himself, whose popularity as a dramatist was suddenly eclipsed. One must be somewhat familiar with Elizabethan poetry before he can fully understand the significance of the dramatic revolution that followed the production of "*Tamburlaine*." He should at least read "*Gorboduc*," and two or three of the plays of Peele and Greene, — say, Peele's "*Arraignment of Paris*," and Greene's "*Orlando Furioso*," — before he reads "*Tamburlaine*," which will amply repay him for that dreary preparation, and clearly demonstrate the superior genius of Marlowe. Conscious of his powers, and confident

of himself, he had a greater aptitude for dramatic writing than any of his contemporaries. His impetuous spirit refused to be fettered by rhyme, which he felt was inadequate for dramatic purposes; and, if Surrey had not discovered blank verse, we may be sure that he would have discovered it, for his use of it, all things considered, was the greatest discovery of all. He was the first to divine its capacities, and to develop them heroically. He knew what he was about when he sat down to write "Tamburlaine."

"From jiggling veins of rhyming mother-wits,
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatening the world with high astounding terms,
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.
View but his picture in this tragic glass,
And then applaud his fortunes as you please."

The first part of "Tamburlaine," which was represented, we are assured, before Marlowe had attained his twenty-third year, was speedily succeeded by the second part.

"The general welcomes Tamburlaine receiv'd,
When he arrivèd last upon the stage,
Have made our poet pen his Second Part,
Where Death cuts off the progress of his pomp,
And murderous Fates throw all his triumphs down."

"Tamburlaine" was succeeded by "The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus," "The Jew of Malta," "Edward the Second," and "The Massacre of Paris." It may interest the reader of this sketch to know that the celebrated actor Edward Allyn, the founder of Dulwich College, played the part of Tamburlaine in a copper-laced coat and red velvet breeches, and the part of Barabas the Jew with a false nose. It would seem, indeed, as Dyce has pointed out, that, on the early English stage, the children of Israel were always furnished with an extra quantity of nose, as if a race so universally hated could hardly be made to appear too ugly. The career of Marlowe was

more illustrious, it seems to me, than that of any other English poet ; for no other English poet, so far as I remember, ever surpassed all his contemporaries at so early an age as he, or ever achieved so much distinction by his first work. Other poets, the most eminent, served their apprenticeship in the divine art : from the beginning, Marlowe was a master. That his success was resented, as we are told it was, by Greene and Nash, was natural ; for, not to insist upon the jealousy and envy with which the poetic temperament has always been credited, and of which they had, no doubt, their full share, it touched them in that vital part, — the pocket. They had the market to themselves before this young interloper from Cambridge set up a stall of his own, and had his wares preferred to theirs. It was monstrous, sirs, monstrous.

The personal history of Marlowe was probably not worse than the personal history of most of his dramatic contemporaries, — certainly not worse than that of Greene, — but at best it was bad enough. He was dissolute, debauched, profligate, addicted to his cups ; a swaggering roisterer, always ready for brawls. But others were as ready as he ; and among them was one Francis Archer, with whom he was feasting one summer-day at Deptford, and upon whom, while they were playing at backgammon, he suddenly drew his dagger, intending to stab him in the back. The intention was perceived by Archer, who avoided the blow, and, drawing his own dagger, struck him in the eye, bringing away the brains as he withdrew the weapon. In a few hours he was dead. Such was Christopher Marlowe, who perished in his thirtieth year, the greatest poet of his age, with the exception of William Shakespeare, whose greatness had still to manifest itself. The death of Marlowe was seized upon with avidity by the Puritans, and he was held up as an awful example of the judgment of God. He was a free-thinker, an atheist, a blasphemer ; there was no known crime that was not imputed to him. As no one man could have been guilty of all the wickedness he was charged with, and as one of his accusers was afterwards hanged at Tyburn, let us charitably render the Scotch verdict — “ Not proven.” The Devil himself is not as black as he is painted by the theologians.

The great gift of poetry — the greatest which Heaven has conferred upon mankind, and the one which, if well balanced and wisely exercised, confers the greatest pleasure on mankind — is a dangerous gift to its possessor. It separates him from his fellows, whose pursuits are of material and not spiritual things; and it creates for him a life in which they have no share. A law unto itself, it is lawlessness to them. If we cast our eyes back from the poets of the nineteenth century to the poets of the sixteenth century, — from Swinburne to Marlowe, say, — they will not rest upon many who command respect for what they were, as well as what they wrote; who were men first, and poets afterward. We find, in this small group of immortals, the gracious figure of Shakespeare, the stern figure of Milton, the thoughtful figure of Wordsworth: we do not find Burns there, nor Byron, nor Shelley. Many of the errors with which the personal history of the English poets is stained were, no doubt, temperamental; others appear to have been hereditary: but the greater number, I fear, were sheer wilfulness. The consciousness of great powers is a misfortune to all but the greatest minds, for these alone distinguish between their use and abuse.

“Oh! it is excellent

To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous

To use it like a giant.”

Power for power's sake is not poetry. Byron never learned this truth; but the young Keats — the manikin whom he wished somebody would flay alive — knew it instinctively. Hear him: —

“A drainless shower

Of light is poesy: 'tis the supreme of power;

'Tis might half slumbering on its own right arm;

The very archings of her eyelids charm

A thousand willing agents to obey;

And still she governs with the mildest sway:

But strength alone, though of the Muses born,

Is like a fallen angel; trees uptorn,

Darkness and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres,

Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs

And thorns of life ; forgetting the great end
Of poesy, — that it should be a friend
To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts, of man."

As we define poetry, which is not to be defined, so we divide the poets into schools, which, strictly speaking, are not schools. The poetry of different periods is marked by certain characteristics, which are strong in some poets and weak in others, and which suggest other characteristics that have not yet manifested themselves. What most impresses me in the poetry of Marlowe, — a feeling of prodigality, a sense of daring, the splendor of a fiery spirit, — I find in no poet since, save in Algernon Charles Swinburne. I find great qualities in the old dramatists, — in Kyd, in Chapman, in Tourneur, in Ford, in Webster, — strange passions, strong situations, the terror and the pathos of tragedy ; but, with the exception of the scenes of Webster, they are not the body of their work, but rather the light that is flashed upon it, and the darkness in which that light is suddenly swallowed up. When we have left the great race of the old dramatists, — of whom Shirley, Lamb says, was the last, — we have left the glory and the greatness of English verse. We are among clever men, — satirists and wits, like Dryden and Pope and their followers, writers of natural description like Thomson, writers of pastorals and elegies, like Shenstone and Lyttleton ; but we are not among poets, — not among the makers. There is that in Collins and Gray which commands our admiration ; in Cowper, which commands our respect ; in Burns, which commands our love, — which ripples in smiles, and melts in the mist of tears. But the fervor, the force, the elemental energy of the old masters, is not theirs. They are fettered by poetic traditions. These traditions were loosened by Wordsworth and Coleridge, who quickened the materiality of their predecessors by the injection of their own personality, which they mistook for philosophy ; and by Scott, who discovered the metrical romance in balladry, or recovered it from this balladry, wherein, like the famous old German emperor, it had long slumbered, hearkening in dreams for the striking of the hour that was to awaken it. The fetters were loosened, but not broken, until Byron and Shelley rose in their young might, and indig-

nantly rent them asunder, restoring to song its ancient kingdom, and to man his freedom of mind. One has not to read far in Byron and Shelley, before he feels that a new force is at work in English verse, and the determination of this feeling in himself is the determination of his intellectual condition. If he believes in the old order of things, it is a destructive force, and he condemns it: if he believes in a new order of things, it is a reconstructive force, and he applauds it. But whatever he believes, he recognizes the force. It is directed, in the poetry of Byron, against society and politics; in the poetry of Shelley, against society, politics, and religion. One struck at the State, the other at the State and the Church. Of course their poetry was informed with other elements than those that are implied in this brief statement, for they were poets as well as revolutionists, — creators as well as destroyers; but in the main it was what I have indicated, — a fearless, resolute warfare with whatever men worshipped and feared. It is not ended yet, but it will be one day.

“ For freedom’s battle, once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won.”

There have been no sudden makings of splendid names in England since the creator of “Childe Harold” woke up one morning, and found himself famous; but there have since been mornings there when other creators have woke up, and found themselves not undistinguished. It was not so difficult to startle the readers of English verse in the second decade of the century as in the seventh; for, whatever we may think of the poets of the former, it is certain they had not taken so strong a hold on their contemporaries as the poets of the latter, who had attained an excellence not before dreamed of, and who appeared to occupy every kingdom and province of song. The glory of Scott was the last red tints of a setting sun, and the glory of Wordsworth the first mild radiance of a rising moon, when Byron came like a comet, and paled their ineffectual fires. It was neither moonrise nor sunset when Swinburne came, but the full splendor of noontide, — the noontide of which the genius of Tennyson was

the golden light, and the genius of Browning the concourse of circumambient clouds. Between the fleeting shadow of these clouds and the girdling spaces of sunshine he stepped forth, — a slight figure in the garments of the Greek priesthood, — youthful but for the grave, far-off look in his eyes, and passionate but for the cold severity of his mien. Young priest of an old religion, he rekindled the fire upon its antique altar, and restored the worship of its imperious gods. Such was the coming of Swinburne with "*Atalanta in Calydon*." Regarded reverently at all times by the few poets who were scholars, the study of Greek poetry was productive of but little in England after Chapman finished his translation of Homer. Other translations of lesser Greek poets followed, and other translations of Homer, the chiefest being the heroic version of Pope, — which the great critic Bentley admitted to be a pretty poem, though it was not Homer, — and the blank-verse rendering of Cowper, which was more faithful and less readable. The genius of Greek poetry was alien to the English mind until it revealed itself to the young imagination of Keats, who wore it in his heart of hearts, not because he was a scholar, — for a scholar he was not, — but because he was a Greek. There are a thousand faults in "*Endymion*," but the unpardonable fault of falsehood is not one of them. It is true, everywhere true to the spirit of Greek pastoral poetry, of which it was the first, and is the last, example in English song. How thoroughly the genius of Keats was possessed with the beautiful mythology of Greece, and how rapidly it matured his wonderful genius, which in writing "*Endymion*" outgrew the lush luxuriance of manner which is the worst defect of that poem, we see in his Odes "*To Psyche*," and "*On a Grecian Urn*," — exquisite productions in the purest style of art, — and in the fragment of "*Hyperion*," wherein magnificence of conception and severity of expression are alike conspicuous, and where, for the first time, the epical height of the Greeks is attained by an English poet. The secret of "*Hyperion*" and "*Endymion*" inhered in the temperament of Keats, who *was* a Greek, as one of his friends declared. The secret of "*Atalanta in Calydon*" was an outcome of the scholarship of Swinburne; for only a scholar, and a ripe one, — a Grecian as distinguished from

a Greek, — could have written that noble tragedy. It demanded more than the affluent sympathy of Keats: it demanded a fulness of knowledge which was denied him, — knowledge of the intention which was the inspiration of Greek tragedy, of the laws by which it was governed, and of the end to which it was directed, and which was to awaken by the simplest means emotions of pity and terror. If the inspiration of "*Atalanta in Calydon*" could have been drawn from any source other than the scholarship of Swinburne, I do not know where to look for it among the writings of his contemporaries or predecessors. He must have admired the Hellenics of Landor, who, like himself, was a Greek, though of a different type; but a profounder feeling than admiration for those noble productions, the spirit of which is idyllic rather than dramatic, was exercised in the shaping of his tragedy. He was charmed, no doubt, with Tennyson's "*Ulysses*," the repose of which is suggestive of the descriptive passages in Greek tragedy, and also, no doubt, with Browning's "*Artemis Prologuizes*," the art of which is of a sterner cast; but neither could have discovered his genius for him, or directed him in the path he had chosen. He could not have been helped by Arnold's "*Empedocles on Ætna*," still less by his tragedy of "*Merope*."

What Marlowe's "*Tamburlaine the Great*" was in our dramatic literature, of which it was the first ripe flower, the first triumphant voice, — such was Swinburne's "*Atalanta in Calydon*." There was nothing like it in English verse before it appeared, and there has been nothing like it since. It was the first and last awakening of the tragic Muse of Greece, — a stern, magnificent, awful spirit, speaking the large language of the gods, and moving to her end like Fate. The qualities by which the blank verse of Marlowe is distinguished — the strength which impelled his contemporaries to call it a "mighty line," its daring use, not to say abuse, of language, and its wild, stormy music — are conspicuous in "*Atalanta in Calydon*." The originality of Swinburne's blank verse is as absolute as the originality of Marlowe's blank verse. It is an instrument upon which he was the first to play, and whose volume of sound no hand save his could evoke and control. One needs to be a poet in order to comprehend

the difficulties it overcomes, and the triumphs it achieves, — the art, in short, of which it is so magnificent an example. But one need not be a poet in order to feel its solemnity, its grandeur, its greatness, and the weight of the stern, dark thought with which it is charged. And one need not be a poet to feel that he never before encountered such an opulence of diction, such a wealth of words, such a largess of language, as Swinburne showers upon his song. And it is not merely language, of which there is a sufficiency in the poetry of the period, which is rather employed in the coining of phrases than of thoughts : it is the best, the strongest, the most poetic, with which the vocabulary of any modern poet was ever enriched. It is a royal treasure-house, the resources of which are incalculable and inexhaustible. Another quality to be noted in Swinburne, and one which allies him to the masters, is his sense of rhythm, — the music which is the inspiration and creation of metrical thought, and in which it lives, moves, and has its being. We find it in the great works of Shakespeare, and in his songs : in the early poems of Milton, — the songs in “*Comus*,” and passages in “*Paradise Lost* ;” and occasionally in Beaumont and Fletcher. We do not find it in Dryden and Pope, or, to come to our own time, in Scott or Byron. They knew nothing of the unheard melodies of which Keats tells us, but played, with their pipes or their trumpets, the old tunes which had been handed down to them, and from which such life as they may once have had had long since departed. It was otherwise with Swinburne, whose sense of music was profound, and who had, besides, an ear of his own which taught him, that, much as the masters had accomplished, they had not discovered all the secrets of English verse, particularly the great secret which underlies all great poetry, — the compulsion of discords into harmonies. The combinations of sound which run so strangely through Swinburne’s poetry, and which cannot but end, one would think, in the harshest discords, become, in his hands, rivers of sonorous music, which rush and roar along their several ways until they reach the sea, and are swallowed up in its long, tumultuous, endless harmony.

When the history of English verse in the nineteenth century comes to be written, Swinburne will certainly figure in one chapter, and as

prominently as any of his contemporaries or predecessors. This chapter will be devoted to the poetic drama, which will be considered — which cannot fail to be considered — a sorry survival of the poetic drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It will contain the great names of Byron, and Coleridge, and Shelley, and Browning, and Tennyson, and the lesser names of Maturin, and Milman, and Knowles, and Talfourd, and Bulwer; but it will contain no great works, unless the historian of the future shall persuade himself that “Pippa Passes,” and “Colombe’s Birthday,” and “A Blot on the ‘Scutcheon’” are such. There were great possibilities in Beddoes, who conceived dramatic situations as strong as those of Webster; but unfortunately they mastered him before he could master them, and so remained suggestions, — fragments, —

“Like the red outline of beginning Adam.”

There are two intellectual movements in this century, which are detrimental to, if they are not destructive of, the poetic drama. The first, the creative movement, which two centuries ago was exercised in the poetic drama, is now exercised in the prose novel, the second, the poetic movement, which was then exercised in a general lyrical exaltation, is now exercised in the narrow province of personality. Men who, in the days of Shakespeare, would have written plays, in our day have written novels; and other men, who, in those days, would at least have tried to write plays, are content in ours to write productions which they hope will pass muster as plays on account of the pretty personal poetry with which they are so lavishly bestrewn! Two gifts are indispensable to the dramatic poet: one is the power of forgetting himself, the other the power of remembering his characters. But these gifts have not been bestowed upon the poets of our time, who are always remembering themselves, and always forgetting their characters, and consequently are not dramatic poets. Swinburne occupies a prominent place among the crowd of contributors to the poetic drama of the nineteenth century, and occupies it justly, as it seems to me. There is nothing in the whole range of the English drama with which his trilogy of plays of which *Mary, Queen of Scots*,

is the heroine, can be compared ; and whether one likes it or not, it is certainly a remarkable work. It is remarkable for the skill with which he has delineated the character and passions of that strange woman, — siren of hearts, who clung to the hearts she broke, loving the love if not the lover ; angel of light and darkness, and beautiful in both, — and it is remarkable for its length, which exceeds that of any dramatic work in the language, as the length of “*The Ring and the Book*” exceeds that of any narrative poem. It is an epical tragedy.

Every thing that Swinburne has written is stamped with his individuality, — a confident and wilful originality, which is at once the source of his strength and his weakness. He held it in check when he wrote “*Atalanta in Calydon* ;” but when he wrote his “*Poems and Ballads*,” it ran away with him, and he has never succeeded in mastering it since. He was poet enough and critic enough to know that “*Poems and Ballads*” would provoke censure. The world may be mistaken in many things, but it is not likely to be mistaken in so simple a thing as its own sense of morality. It knows — we all know — that we are not living in a state of nature. We have outlived its liberty, its wild will, its strong instincts, — the license of its thoughts and manners. We outlived all those before the first poet sang, and we will not let the last poet recall them. There is no poetry in them, there is not art in them : they are bad poetry, they are bad art, and, worse than all, they are hideously immoral. Some such feeling as this startled the countrymen of Swinburne in “*Poems and Ballads*.” Purlblind to many things, there is no limit to their vision when their eyes are once open. They saw nothing objectionable in the scene between Sebald and Ottima in “*Pippa Passes*,” which they had been reading for twenty years ; and nothing objectionable in “*Chastelard*,” which they were then reading. But “*Poems and Ballads*” shocked them into one of those sudden spasms of virtuous indignation to which they are subject ; and they straightway proceeded to magnify the poet’s offences. They explained his veiled allusions, and dragged his hidden meanings to light. What an ordinary reader would not have understood, they compelled him to understand, committing in their criticism the very fault that Swinburne committed in his poetry.

What went to the genesis of these poems is a literary or personal secret which it will behoove the biographers of Swinburne to discover. He may have written them as so many dramatic studies, or he may have written them as so many expressions of himself. But for whatever purpose they may have been written, they did not and could not have come from a healthy mind : they are morbid, feverous, diseased, — sick unto death with the awful sickness of the soul. It was in his genius to write them, and live ; but not to regain the health, the strength, the sanity, that were his when he wrote “*Atalanta in Calydon*.”

It is the fortune, or the misfortune, of Swinburne, that he has not been criticised : he has been praised and abused, but criticised never. He was accepted at once, as he should have been ; but he was not questioned, when he should have been questioned over and over. His intentions have not been examined, nor his methods scrutinized. He may be one of the masters of song, or he may be only one of its scholars : we have to judge for ourselves which he is. I have read, I believe, all that he has written, — with admiration for much, which I feel is very fine ; with regret for more, which I know is very faulty. He has great poetic gifts, but he is not a great poet ; for no man can be a great poet who is not a wise and solid thinker, and whose language is not large and direct.

I made a careful study of Swinburne's genius a year or two ago, taking for my text his only attempt at a narrative poem, “*Tristram of Lyonesse* ;” and, as what I wrote then expresses what I think now, I shall repeat the substance of it here. I began by saying that it was a little curious, in view of the tendency of the modern English mind towards literary studies, that no one had yet made a study of his genius and his method of working, both of which were remarkable, and remarkably faulty. They were faulty, I said ; for measured by the large methods of the great English poets, and the scope and style of their work, his work was exceedingly narrow, and his method merely a manner. He has published a dozen or more volumes of verse ; but he has written no line that lingers in the memory, and has uttered nothing that resembles a thought. This could not have been the

case if he had been gifted with unusual mental endowments ; for many a lesser poet has occasionally thought to some purpose, and has written verses that are remembered. One of his defects, perhaps his prime defect, is the brilliancy and force of his vocabulary. No poet ever excelled him in the profusion with which he throws off rich and picturesque and spirited words : he is a perfect master of epithets. His pages are luminous mists of language, the exact meaning of which, and their bearing upon the matter in hand, it is generally difficult to discover, they are so bravely put forth, and with such sonorous pomps of sound. For his music is never less, but often more, than his sense. He is a wonderful musician, if nothing else. He appears to have a great command of words ; but when one looks into his manner carefully, one is struck with the really small number at his command, or, to state it more critically, with the rapidity with which the same words are perpetually turning up, and the little they really signify. The effects of brightness, for example, are indicated five times in the first nine lines of "Tristram of Lyonesse," and are scattered bewilderingly throughout the whole poem. Every thing is suggestive of imagery ; but when one attempts to grasp the imagery it proves a *fata morgana*, which disappears, flitting from page to page and resting nowhere. He abounds with allusions to the great objects of nature, the sky and the sun, and day and night ; but he never brings them before us as we are accustomed to see them, — for the simple reason, perhaps, that he has never seen them as they are, but as they seem to him through the haze of what he would call his imagination. The world as it flashes and glimmers in his lines is a very different world from the spot which men call earth ; obeying other planetary conditions than that, and exhibiting a flora and fauna of startling novelty. The qualities I mentioned were as evident, I said, in Swinburne's early work as in his latest, though they were not so abundant there, nor of such permanent significance. There was a time when he might have overcome them, or at least have put them under the restraint of his critical powers ; but, unfortunately, that time is past, for what at first was a tentative manner has now become a determined vice, which mars all his intellectual efforts. It is due to him to say

vocabulary, which resembles nothing so much as the luxuriance of a tropical forest. The same defect marked the tentative career of Keats, while he was writing "Endymion," the sense of which often depends upon the good or bad luck of the poet in finding the necessary rhyme; but Keats outgrew this defect so rapidly, that, in little more than a year after the completion of "Endymion," he began "Hyperion." Swinburne wanders as aimlessly in "Tristram of Lyonesse" as if he had selected "Endymion" as a model, — a model that he has fallen short of, in that he nowhere reproduces that exquisite sense of poetic luxury, and that trembling sensitiveness to beauty, which are vital in all that Keats wrote, — even in the bits of doggerel which croon out brokenly in his careless letters. What he probably had before him in writing "Tristram of Lyonesse," or what he read before he sat down to write it, was "Lamia," the music of whose heroic lines, as varied and strengthened by occasional triplets and alexandrines, appears to have impressed him; but not powerfully, for he remembered it only at long intervals, and then merely as an effect which it might be well to try again, and in rapid succession. What Dryden and Keats intended and accomplished by these departures from the laws of the heroic couplet, he seems never to have perceived.

But enough of "Tristram of Lyonesse," which I have not reprinted, out of consideration for the readers of this volume, whose poetic patience I had no right to burden; and enough — more than enough — of criticism of Swinburne. What I set out to do was to select what was best in his poetry; and, as this seemed to lie in three directions, I followed them carefully, — first in the narrow province of Greek tragedy, next in the broad world of the English drama, and last in the enchanted region of romantic verse. If I have done what I sought to do, I have honored the genius of Algernon Charles Swinburne.

R. H. STODDARD.

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ATALANTA IN CALYDON.

TO THE MEMORY

OF

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

I NOW DEDICATE, WITH EQUAL AFFECTION, REVERENCE, AND REGRET,
A POEM INSCRIBED TO HIM WHILE YET ALIVE IN WORDS WHICH ARE NOW RETAINED
BECAUSE THEY WERE LAID BEFORE HIM;
AND TO WHICH, RATHER THAN CANCEL THEM, I HAVE ADDED SUCH OTHERS AS WERE EVOKED
BY THE NEWS OF HIS DEATH:
THAT THOUGH LOSING THE PLEASURE I MAY NOT LOSE THE HONOR OF INSCRIBING
IN FRONT OF MY WORK
THE HIGHEST OF CONTEMPORARY NAMES.

ὦχεο δὴ Βορέηθεν ἀπότροπος ἄλλὰ σε Νύμφαι
 ἤγαγον Ἀσπασίαν ἠδὲ Πύρροι καθ' ἅλα,
 πληροῦσαι μέλιτος θεόθεν στόμα, μὴ τι Ποσειδῶν
 βλάβῃ, ἐν ὣσιν ἔχων σὴν μελίγηρυν ὕπα,
 τοίος ὠιδὸς ἔφυς· ἡμεῖς δ' ἔτι κλαίμεν, οἱ σου
 δυνόμεθ' οἰχομένου, καὶ σε ποθοῦμεν αἰεὶ.
 εἶπε δὲ Πιερίδων τις ἀναστρεφθεῖσα πρὸς ἄλλην·
 ἦλθεν, ἰδὼν, πάντων φίλτατος ἦλθε βροτῶν,
 στέμματα δρεψόμενος νεοθηλέα χερσὶ γεραιαῖς,
 καὶ πολὺν δάφνας ἀμφεκάλυψε κύρην
 ἠδὲ τι Σικελικαῖς ἐπὶ πηκτίσιν, ἠδὲ τι χόρδαϊς,
 ἰσόμενος· πολλὴν γὰρ μετέβαλλε λύραν,
 πολλάκι δ' ἐν βήσσαισι καθήμενον εὖρεν Ἀπόλλων·
 ἄνθεσι δ' ἔστεψεν, τερπνὴ δ' ἔδωκε λέγειν,
 Πᾶνα γ' αἰμίνηστόν τε Πίτυν Κόρνυόν τε δύσεα·
 ἦν γ' ἐφίλησε θεὸν θνητὸς Ἀμαδρύναια·
 πόντου δ' ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐκοίμισε Κυμοδάμειαν,
 τήν γ' Ἀγαμέμνονιαν παῖδ' ἀπέδωκε πατρὶ,
 πρὸς δ' ἱερὸς Δελφοὺς θεόπληκτον ἔπεμψεν Ὀρεστήν·
 τεφρόμενον στυγεραῖς ἐνθα καὶ ἐνθα θεαῖς.

ὦχεο δὴ καὶ ἄνευθε φίλων καὶ ἄνευθεν αἰοδῆς.
 δρεψόμενος μαλακῆς ἄνθεα Περσεφόνης.
 ὦχεο· κοῦκ ἔτ' ἔσει, κοῦκ αὖ ποτέ σοι παρεδοῦμαι
 ἄζόμενος, χειρῶν χερσὶ θιγὼν ὁσίαις·
 νῦν δ' αὖ μνησάμενον γλυκύπικρος ὑπήλυθεν αἰδῶς,
 οἷα τυχὼν οἶον πρὸς σέθεν οἶος ἔχω·
 οὔποτε σοῖς, γέρον, ὄμμα φίλοις φίλον ὅμμασι τέρψω,
 σῆς, γέρον, ἀψάμενος, φίλτατε, δεξιτερῶς
 ἢ ψαφαρὰ κόνις, ἢ ψαφαρὸς βίος ἔστι· τὶ τούτων
 μείον ἐφημερίων; οὐ κόνις ἀλλὰ βίος.
 ἀλλὰ μοι ἡδύτερός γε πέλεις πολλὸν τῶν ἔτ' ἐόντων,
 ἔπλεο γάρ· σοὶ μὴν ταῦτα θανόντι φέρω,
 παῦρα μὲν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κῆρος ἐτήτυμα· μηδ' ἀποτρεφθῆς,
 πρὸς δὲ βαλὼν ἔτι νῦν ἥσυχον ὄμμα δέχων.
 οὐ γὰρ ἔχω, μέγα δὴ τι θέλων, σέθεν ἄξια δοῦναι
 θαπτομένον περ' ἀπὼν· οὐ γὰρ ἔνεστιν ἔμοι·
 οὔδε μελικρήτου παρέχειν γάνος· εἰ γὰρ ἐνείη
 καὶ σε χεροῖν ψαύσαι καὶ σέ ποτ' αὐθις ἰδεῖν,
 δάκρυσί τε σπονδαῖς τε κύρα φίλον ἀμφιπολεύειν
 ὀφθαλμοῦς θ' ἱεροῦς σοῦς ἱερόν τε δέμας.
 εἴθ' ὄφελον· μάλα γὰρ τάδ' ἵν' ἀμπαύσειε μερίμνης·
 νῦν δὲ πρόσσωθεν ἄνευ σήματος οἰκτον ἄγω·
 οὐδ' ἐπιτυμβίδιον θρηνῶ μέλος, ἀλλ' ἀπαμνυθεῖς,
 ὅλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἔχων ἀμφιδακρυτὰ πάθη.
 ἀλλὰ σὺ χαῖρε θανῶν, καὶ ἔχων γέρας ἴσθι πρὸς ἀνδρῶν
 πρὸς τε θεῶν, ἐνέροις εἰ τις ἔπεστι θεός.
 χαῖρε γέρον, φίλε χαῖρε πατὲρ, πολλὸν φέρτατ' αἰοδῶν
 ὦν ἰδομεν, πολλὸν δὴ φέρτατ' ἀεισομένων·
 χαῖρε, καὶ ὄλβον ἔχοις, οἷόν γε θανόντες ἔχουσιν,
 ἡσυχίαν ἔχθρας καὶ φιλόμητος ἄτερ.

σῆματος οἰχομένον σοι μνήματ' ἐς ἰστερον ἔσται,
σοί τε φίλῃ μνήμῃ μνήματος οἰχομένον·
ὃν Χάριτες κλαίονσι θεαί, κλαίει δ' Ἀφροδίτη
καλλιχόροις Μουσῶν τερψαμένη στεφάνοις
οὐ γὰρ ἅπαξ ἱερούς ποτε γῆρας ἔτριψεν ὠιδούς·
τήνδ' ἐπὶ τὸν σὸν φαίνει μνῆμα τόδ' ἀγλαΐαν.
ἡ φίλος ἥς μακάρεσσι βροτῶς, σοὶ δ' εἰ τι Νύμφαι
δῶρα ποθεινὰ νέμειν, ὕστατα δῶρ', ἔδοσαν.
τὰς νῦν χάλκεος ὕπνος ἔβη καὶ ἀνήμερος αἰὼν,
καὶ συνθαπτομέναι μοῖραν ἔχουσι μίαν.
εὐδεις καὶ σὺ, καλὸν καὶ ἀγάκλυτον ἐν χθονὶ κοίλῃ
ὕπνον ἐφικόμενος, σῆς ἀπόνουσι πύτρας,
τῇλε παρὰ ξανθοῦ Τυρσηνικὸν οἶδμα καθεύδεις
νύματος, ἣ δ' ἔτι σὴ μαῦν σε γαῖα ποθεῖ,
ἀλλ' ἀπέχεις, καὶ πρόσθε φιλόπτολις ὦν περ ἀπείπας·
εὐδε· μάκαρ δ' ἡμῖν οὐδ' ἀμέγαρτος ἔσει.
βαῖδς ἐπιχθονίων γε χρόνος καὶ μοῖρα κρατῆσει,
τοὺς δέ ποτ' εὐφροσύνη τοὺς δέ ποτ' ἄλγος ἔχει·
πολλάκι δ' ἡ βλάπτει φάος ἡ σκότος ἀμφικαλύπτει
μυρομένους, δάκνει δ' ὕπνος ἐγρηγορότας·
οὐδ' ἔθ' ὅτ' ἐν τύμβοισι κατέδραθεν ὄμμα θαιόντων
ἡ σκότος ἡ τι φάος δῆξεται ἡελίου·
οὐδ' ὄναρ ἐννύχιον καὶ ἐνύπνιον οὐδ' ὕπαρ ἔσται
ἡ ποτε τερπομένοις ἡ ποτ' ὕδρομένοις·
ἀλλ' ἓνα πάντες ἕλ' ἰθὺς συνέχουσι καὶ ἔδραν
ἅντ' ἐπὶ βροτῆς ἀβροτον, κάλλιμον ἅντι κακῆς.

ATALANTA IN CALYDON.

THE PERSONS.

CHIEF HUNTSMAN.
CHORUS.
ALTHÆA.

MELEAGER.
CENEUS.
ATALANTA.

TOXEUS.
PLEXIPPUS.
HERALD.

MESSANGER.
SECOND MESSENGER

ἴστω δ' ὅστις οὐχ ὑπόπτερος
φροντίσιν δαείς.
τὰν ἁ παιδολύμας τάλαινα Θεστίας μήσατο
πυρδαῇ τινα πρόνοιαν,
καταίθουσα παιδὸς δαφνοῖνόν

δαλὸν ἤλικ' ἐπεὶ μολῶν
ματρώθεν κελάδῃσε
σύμμετράν τε διαὶ βίου
μοῖρόκραντον ἐς ἄμαρ.

ÆSCH. Cho. 602-612.

THE ARGUMENT.

ALTHÆA, daughter of Thestius and Eurythemis, queen of Calydon, being with child of Meleager her first-born son, dreamed that she brought forth a brand burning. And, upon his birth, came the three Fates, and prophesied of him three things, namely these: that he should have great strength of his hands, and good fortune in this life, and that he should live no longer when the brand then in the fire were consumed; wherefore his mother plucked it forth, and kept it by her. And the child, being a man grown, sailed with Jason after the fleece of gold, and won himself great praise of all men living; and, when the tribes of the North and West made war upon Ætolia, he fought against their army, and scattered it. But Artemis, having at the first stirred up these tribes to war against Ceneus king of Calydon, because he had offered sacrifice to all the gods saving her alone, but her he had forgotten to honor, was yet more wroth because of the destruction of this army, and sent upon the land of Calydon a wild boar which slew many and wasted all their increase, but him could none slay, and many went against him and perished. Then were all the chief men of Greece gathered together, and among them Atalanta daughter of Iasius the Arcadian, a virgin; for whose sake Artemis let slay the boar, seeing she favored the maiden greatly; and Meleager having despatched it gave the spoil thereof to Atalanta, as one beyond measure enamoured of her; but the brethren of Althæa his mother, Toxeus and Plexippus, with such others as misliked that she only should bear off the praise whereas many had borne the labor, laid wait for her to take away her spoil; but Meleager fought against them, and slew them: whom when Althæa their sister beheld, and knew to be slain of her son, she waxed for wrath and sorrow like as one mad, and, taking the brand whereby the measure of her son's life was meted to him, she cast it upon a fire; and with the wasting thereof his life likewise wasted away, that being brought back to his father's house he died in a brief space; and his mother also endured not long after for very sorrow; and this was his end, and the end of that hunting.

Chief Huntsman. Maiden, and mistress of the months and stars
Now folded in the flowerless fields of heaven,
Goddess whom all gods love with three-fold heart,

Being treble in thy divided deity,
A light for dead men and dark hours,
a foot
Swift on the hills as morning, and a hand
To all things fierce and fleet that roar
and range

Mortal, with gentler shafts than snow or sleep;	Euenus, wedded with the straitening sea.
Hear now and help and lift no violent hand,	For in fair time thou comest; come also thou,
But favorable and fair as thine eye's beam	Twin-born with him, and virgin, Arte- mis,
Hidden and shown in heaven; for I all night	And give our spears their spoil, the wild boar's hide,
Amid the king's hounds and the hunting men	Sent in thine anger against us for sin done
Have wrought and worshipped toward thee; nor shall man	And bloodless altars without wine or fire.
See goodlier hounds or deadlier edge of spears;	Him now consume thou; for thy sacri- fice
But for the end, that lies unreached at yet Between the hands and on the knees of gods.	With sanguine-shining steam divides the dawn,
O fair-faced sun killing the stars and dews	And one, the maiden rose of all thy maids,
And dreams and desolation of the night!	Arcadian Atalanta, snowy-souled,
Rise up, shine, stretch thine hand out, with thy bow	Fair as the snow and footed as the wind, From Ladon and well-wooded Mænalus Over the firm hills and the fleeting sea
Touch the most dimmest height of trem- bling heaven,	Hast thou drawn hither, and many an armed king,
And burn and break the dark about thy ways,	Heroes, the crown of men, like gods in fight.
Shot through and through with arrows; let thine hair	Moreover out of all the Ætolian land, From the full-flowered Lelantian pas- ture
Lighten as flame above that flameless shell	To what of fruitful field the son of Zeus
Which was the moon, and thine eyes fill the world	Won from the roaring river and labor- ing sea
And thy lips kindle with swift beams; let earth	When the wild god shrank in his horn and fled
Laugh, and the long sea fiery from thy feet	And foamed and lessened through his wrathful fords,
Through all the roar and ripple of streaming springs	Leaving clear lands that steamed with sudden sun,
And foam in reddening flakes and flying flowers	These virgins with the lightening of the day
Shaken from hands and blown from lips of nymphs	Bring thee fresh wreaths and their own sweeter hair,
Whose hair or breast divides the wan- dering wave	Luxurious locks and flower-like mixed with flowers,
With salt close tresses cleaving lock to lock,	Clean offering, and chaste hymns; but me the time
All gold, or shuddering and unfurrowed snow;	Divides from these things; whom do thou not less
And all the winds about thee with their wings,	Help and give honor, and to mine hounds good speed,
And fountain-heads of all the watered world;	And edge to spears, and luck to each man's hand.
Each horn of Achelôus, and the green	

Chorus. When the hounds of spring
are on winter's traces,

The mother of months in meadow or
plain

Fills the shadows and windy places

With lisp of leaves and ripple of
rain;

And the brown bright nightingale am-
orous

Is half assuaged for Itylus,

For the Thracian ships and the foreign
faces,

The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with empty-
ing of quivers,

Maiden most perfect, lady of light,

With a noise of winds and many riv-
ers,

With a clamor of waters, and with
might;

Bind on thy sandals, O thou most
fleet,

Over the splendor and speed of thy
feet;

For the faint east quickens, the wan
west shivers,

Round the feet of the day and the
feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we
sing to her,

Fold our hands round her knees, and
cling?

O that man's heart were as fire and
could spring to her,

Fire, or the strength of the streams
that spring!

For the stars and the winds are unto
her

As raiment, as songs of the harp-
player;

For the risen stars and the fallen cling
to her,

And the southwest-wind and the west-
wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and
sins;

The days dividing lover and lover,

The light that loses, the night that
wins;

And time remembered is grief forgot-
ten,

And frosts are slain and flowers begot-
ten,

And in green underwood and cover

Blossom by blossom the spring be-
gins.

The full streams feed on flower of
rushes,

Ripe grasses trammel a travelling
foot,

The faint fresh flame of the young
year flushes

From leaf to flower and flower to
fruit;

And fruit and leaf are as gold and
fire,

And the oat is heard above the lyre,

And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes

The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-
root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by
night,

Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,

Follows with dancing and fills with
delight

The Mænad and the Bassarid;

And soft as lips that laugh and hide

The laughing leaves of the trees di-
vide,

And screen from seeing and leave in
sight

The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair

Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;

The wild vine slipping down leaves
bare

Her bright breast shortening into
sighs;

The wild vine slips with the weight of
its leaves,

But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that
scare

The wolf that follows, the fawn that
flies.

Althæa. What do ye singing? what
is this ye sing?

Chorus. Flowers bring we, and pure

lips that please the gods,

And raiment meet for service: lest the day

Turn sharp with all its honey in our lips.

Althæa. Night, a black hound, follows the white fawn day,
Swifter than dreams the white flown feet of sleep;

Will ye pray back the night with any prayers?

And though the spring put back a little while

Winter, and snows that plague all men for sin,

And the iron time of cursing, yet I know

Spring shall be ruined with the rain, and storm

Eat up like fire the ashen autumn days.

I marvel what men do with prayers awake

Who dream and die with dreaming; any god,

Yea the least god of all things called divine,

Is more than sleep and waking; yet we say,

Perchance by praying a man shall match his god.

For if sleep have no mercy, and man's dreams

Bite to the blood and burn into the bone,

What shall this man do waking? By the gods,

He shall not pray to dream sweet things to-night,

Having dreamt once more bitter things than death.

Chorus. Queen, but what is it that hath burnt thine heart?

For thy speech flickers like a blown-out flame.

Althæa. Look, ye say well, and know not what ye say;

For all my sleep is turned into a fire, And all my dreams to stuff that kindles it.

Chorus. Yet one doth well being patient of the gods.

Althæa. Yea, lest they smite us with some four-foot plague.

Chorus. But when time spreads find out some herb for it.

Althæa. And with their healing herbs infect our blood.

Chorus. What ails thee to be jealous of their ways?

Althæa. What if they give us poisonous drinks for wine?

Chorus. They have their will; much talking mends it not.

Althæa. And gall for milk, and cursing for a prayer?

Chorus. Have they not given life, and the end of life?

Althæa. Lo, where they heal, they help not; thus they do,

They mock us with a little piteousness,

And we say prayers, and weep; but at the last,

Sparing a while, they smite and spare no whit.

Chorus. Small praise man gets dispraising the high gods:

What have they done that thou dishonorest them?

Althæa. First Artemis for all this harried land

I praise not, and for wasting of the boar That mars with tooth and tusk and fiery feet

Green pasturage and the grace of standing corn

And meadow and marsh with springs and unblown leaves,

Flocks and swift herds and all that bite sweet grass,

I praise her not; what things are these to praise?

Chorus. But when the king did sacrifice, and gave

Each god fair dues of wheat and blood and wine,

Her not with bloodshed nor burnt-offering

Revered he, nor with salt or cloven cake;

Wherefore being wroth she plagued the land; but now

Takes off from us fate and her heavy things.

Which deed of these twain were not good to praise?

For a just deed looks always either way
With blameless eyes, and mercy is no
fault.

Althæa. Yea, but a curse she hath
sent above all these
To hurt us where she healed us; and
hath lit
Fire where the old fire went out, and
where the wind
slackened, hath blown on us with dead-
lier air.

Chorus. What storm is this that tight-
ens all our sail?

Althæa. Love, a thwart sea-wind full
of rain and foam.

Chorus. Whence blown, and born
under what stormier star?

Althæa. Southward across Euenus
from the sea.

Chorus. Thy speech turns toward
Arcadia like blown wind.

Althæa. Sharp as the north sets when
the snows are out.

Chorus. Nay, for this maiden hath no
touch of love.

Althæa. I would she had sought in
some cold gulf of sea

Love, or in dens where strange beasts
lurk, or fire,

Or snows on the extreme hills, or iron
land

Where no spring is; I would she had
sought therein

And found, or ever love had found her
here.

Chorus. She is holier than all holy
days or things,

The sprinkled water or fume of perfect
fire;

Chaste, dedicated to pure prayers, and
filled

With higher thoughts than heaven; a
maiden clean,

Pure iron, fashioned for a sword; and
man

She loves not; what should one such
do with love?

Althæa. Look you, I speak not as one
light of wit,

But as a queen speaks, being heart-
vexed; for oft

I hear my brothers wrangling in mid
hall,

And am not moved; and my son chie-
ing them,

And these things nowise move me, but
I know

Foolish and wise men must be to the
end,

And feed myself with patience; but this
most,

This moves me, that for wise men as
for fools

Love is one thing, an evil thing, and
turns

Choice words and wisdom into fire and
air.

And in the end shall no joy come, but
grief,

Sharp words and soul's division and
fresh tears

Flower-wise upon the old root of tears
brought forth,

Fruit-wise upon the old flower of tears
sprung up,

Pitiful sighs, and much regrafted pain.
These things are in my presage, and

myself
Am part of them and know not; but
in dreams

The gods are heavy on me, and all the
fates

Shed fire across my eyelids mixed with
night,

And burn me blind, and disilluminate
My sense of seeing, and my perspicuous

soul
Darken with vision; seeing I see not,
hear

And hearing am not holpen, but mine
eyes

Stain many tender broideries in the bed
Drawn up about my face that I may

weep
And the king wake not; and my brows
and lips

Tremble and sob in sleeping, like swift
flames

That tremble, or water when it sobs
with heat

Kindled from under; and my tears fill
my breast

And speck the fair dyed pillows round
the king

With barren showers and saltier than
the sea,

Such dreams divide me dreaming; for
 long since
 I dreamed that out of this my womb
 had sprung
 Fire and a firebrand; this was ere my
 son,
 Meleager, a goodly flower in fields of
 fight,
 Felt the light touch him coming forth,
 and wailed
 Childlike; but yet he was not; and in
 time
 I bare him, and my heart was great;
 for yet
 So royally was never strong man born,
 Nor queen so nobly bore as noble a
 thing
 As this my son was: such a birth God
 sent
 And such a grace to bear it. Then
 came in
 Three weaving women, and span each
 a thread,
 Saying This for strength and That for
 luck, and one
 Saying Till the brand upon the hearth
 burn down,
 So long shall this man see good days
 and live.
 And I with gathered raiment from the
 bed
 Sprang, and drew forth the brand, and
 cast on it
 Water, and trod the flame bare-foot,
 and crushed
 With naked hand spark beaten out of
 spark
 And blew against and quenched it; for
 I said,
 These are the most high Fates that
 dwell with us,
 And we find favor a little in their sight,
 A little, and more we miss of, and much
 time
 Foils us; howbeit they have pitied me,
 O son,
 And thee most piteous, thee a tenderer
 thing
 Than any flower of fleshly seed alive.
 Wherefore I kissed and hid him with
 my hands,
 And covered under arms and hair, and
 wept,

And feared to touch him with my tears
 and laughed;
 So light a thing was this man, grown so
 great
 Men cast their heads back, seeing
 against the sun
 Blaze the armed man carven on his
 shield, and hear
 The laughter of little bells along the
 brace
 Ring, as birds singing or flutes blown,
 and watch,
 High up, the cloven shadow of either
 plume
 Divide the bright light of the brass,
 and make
 His helmet as a windy and wintering
 moon
 Seen through blown cloud and plume-
 like drift, when ships
 Drive, and men strive with all the sea,
 and oars
 Break, and the beaks dip under, drink-
 ing death;
 Yet was he then but a span long, and
 moaned
 With inarticulate mouth inseparate
 words,
 And with blind lips and fingers wrung
 my breast
 Hard, and thrust out with foolish hands
 and feet,
 Murmuring, but those gray women
 with bound hair
 Who fright the gods frightened not him;
 he laughed
 Seeing them, and pushed out hands to
 feel and haul
 Distaff and thread, intangible; but
 they
 Passed, and I hid the brand, and in my
 heart
 Laughed likewise, having all my will of
 heaven.
 But now I know not if to left or right
 The gods have drawn us hither; for
 again
 I dreamt, and saw the black brand
 burst on fire
 As a branch bursts in flower, and saw
 the flame
 Fade flower-wise, and Death came and
 with dry lips

Blew the charred ash into my breast;
and Love
Trampled the ember and crushed it
with swift feet.
This I have also at heart; that not for
me,
Not for me only or son of mine, O girls,
The gods have wrought life, and desire
of life,
Heart's love and heart's division; but
for all
There shines one sun and one wind
blows till night.
And when night comes the wind sinks
and the sun,
And there is no light after, and no
storm,
But sleep and much forgetfulness of
things.
In such wise I gat knowledge of the gods
Years hence, and heard high sayings of
one most wise,
Eurythemis my mother, who beheld
With eyes alive and spake with lips of
these
As one on earth disflashed and disallied
From breath or blood corruptible; such
gifts
Time gave her, and an equal soul to
these
And equal face to all things; thus she
said.
But whatsoever intolerable or glad
The swift hours weave and unweave, I
go hence
Full of mine own soul, perfect of my-
self,
Toward mine and me sufficient; and
what chance
The gods cast lots for and shake out
on us,
That shall we take, and that much bear
withal.
And now, before these gather to the
hunt,
I will go arm my son and bring him
forth,
Lest love or some man's anger work
him harm.

Chorus. Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
Grief, with a glass that ran;

Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea;
And dust of the laboring earth;
And bodies of things to be
In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laugh-
ter,
And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after
And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
That his strength might endure for a
span
With travail and heavy sorrow,
The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the
south
They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,
They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labour and thought,
A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,
And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;
With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision
Between a sleep and a sleep.

Meleager. O sweet new heaven and
air without a star,
Fair day, be fair and welcome, as to
men

With deeds to do and praise to pluck
from thee.

Come forth a child, born with clear
sound and light,

With laughter and swift limbs and
prosperous looks;

That this great hunt with heroes for
the hounds

May leave thee memorable and us well
sped.

Althæa. Son, first I praise thy prayer,
then bid thee speed;

But the gods hear men's hands before
their lips,

And heed beyond all crying and sacri-
fice

Light of things done and noise of
laboring men.

But thou, being armed and perfect for
the deed,

Abide; for like rain-flakes in a wind
they grow,

The men thy fellows, and the choice of
the world,

Bound to root out the tuskèd plague,
and leave

Thanks and safe days and peace in
Calydon.

Meleager. For the whole city and all
the low-lying land

Flames, and the soft air sounds with
them that come;

The gods give all these fruit of all
their works.

Althæa. Set thine eye thither and fix
thy spirit and say

Whom there thou knowest; for sharp
mixed shadow and wind

Blown up between the morning and
the mist,

With steam of steeds and flash of
bridle or wheel,

And fire, and parcels of the broken dawn,
And dust divided by hard light, and
spears

That shine and shift as the edge of
wild beasts' eyes,

Smite upon mine; so fiery their blind
edge

Burns, and bright points break up and
baffle day.

Meleager. The first, for many I know
not, being far off,

Peleus the Larissæan, couched with
whom

Sleeps the white sea-bred wife and
silver-shod,

Fair as fled foam, a goddess; and their
son

Most swift and splendid of men's chil-
dren born,

Most like a god, full of the future
fame.

Althæa. Who are these shining like
one sundered star?

Meleager. Thy sister's sons, a double
flower of men.

Althæa. O sweetest kin to me in all
the world,

O twin-born blood of Leda, gracious
heads

Like kindled lights in untempestuous
heaven,

Fair flower-like stars on the iron foam
of fight,

With what glad heart and kindliness of
soul,

Even to the staining of both eyes with
tears

And kindling of warm eyelids with
desire,

A great way off I greet you, and re-
joice

Seeing you so fair, and moulded like as
gods.

Far off ye come, and least in years of
these,

But lordliest, but worth love to look
upon.

Meleager. Even such (for sailing
higher I saw far hence,

And where Eurotas hollows his moist
rock

Nigh Sparta with a strenuous-hearted
stream)

Even such I saw their sisters; one
swan-white,

The little Helen, and less fair than she
Fair Clytemnestra, grave as pasturing
fawns

Who feed and fear some arrow; but at
whiles,

As one smitten with love or wrung
with joy,

She laughs and lightens with her eyes
and then

Weeps; whereat Helen, having laughed,
 weeps too,

And the other chides her, and she being
 child speaks nought,

But cheeks and lips and eyelids kisses
 her,

Laughing; so fare they, as in their
 bloomless bud

And full of unblown life, the blood of
 gods.

Althæa. Sweet days befall them and
 good loves and lords,

And tender and temperate honors of
 the hearth,

Peace, and a perfect life and blameless
 bed.

But who shows next an eagle wrought
 in gold,

That flames and beats broad wings
 against the sun

And with void mouth gapes after
 emptier prey?

Meleager. Know by that sign the
 reign of Telamon

Between the fierce mouths of the en-
 counterer brine

On the strait reefs of twice-washed
 Salamis.

Althæa. For like one great of hand
 he bears himself,

Vine-chapleted, with savors of the sea,
 Glittering as wine and moving as a
 wave.

But who girt round there roughly fol-
 lows him?

Meleager. Ancæus, great of hand, an
 iron bulk,

Two-edged for fight as the axe against
 his arm,

Who drives against the surge of stormy
 spears

Full-sailed; who Cepheus follows, his
 twin-born,

Chief name next his of all Arcadian men.
Althæa. Praise be with men abroad;

chaste lives with us,
 Home-keeping days and household
 reverences.

Meleager. Next by the left unsan-
 dalled foot know thou

The sail and oar of this Ætolian land,
 Thy brethren, Toxeus and the violent-
 souled

Plexippus, over-swift with hand and
 tongue;

For hands are fruitful, but the ignorant
 mouth

Blows and corrupts their work with
 barren breath.

Althæa. Speech too bears fruit, being
 worthy; and air blows down

Things poisonous, and high-seated vio-
 lences,

And with charmed words and songs
 have men put out

Wild evil, and the fire of tyrannies.
Meleager. Yea, all things have they,
 save the gods and love.

Althæa. Love thou the law and cleave
 to things ordained.

Meleager. Law lives upon their lips
 whom these applaud.

Althæa. How sayest thou these? what
 god applauds new things?

Meleager. Zeus, who hath fear and
 custom under foot.

Althæa. But loves not laws thrown
 down and lives awry.

Meleager. Yet is not less himself than
 his own law.

Althæa. Nor shifts and shuffles old
 things up and down.

Meleager. But what he will remoulds
 and discreates.

Althæa. Much, but not this, that each
 thing live its life.

Meleager. Nor only live, but lighten
 and lift up higher.

Althæa. Pride breaks itself, and too
 much gained is gone.

Meleager. Things gained are gone,
 but great things done endure.

Althæa. Child, if a man serve law
 through all his life

And with his whole heart worship,
 him all gods

Praise; but who loves it only with his
 lips,

And not in heart and deed desiring
 it

Hides a perverse will with obsequious
 words;

Him heaven infatuates and his twin-
 born fate

Tracks, and gains on him, scenting sins
 far off,

And the swift hounds of violent death
devour.

Be man at one with equal-minded gods,
So shall he prosper; not through laws
torn up,

Violated rule and a new face of things.
A woman armed makes war upon her-
self,

Unwomanlike, and treads down use
and wont

And the sweet common honor that
she hath,

Love, and the cry of children, and the
hand

Trothplight and mutual mouth of mar-
riages.

This doth she, being unloved; whom if
one love,

Not fire nor iron and the wide-mouthed
wars

Are deadlier than her lips or braided
hair.

For of the one comes poison, and a
curse

Falls from the other and burns the lives
of men.

But thou, son, be not filled with evil
dreams,

Nor with desire of these things; for
with time

Blind love burns out; but if one feed it
fuel

Till some discoloring stain dyes all his
life,

He shall keep nothing praiseworthy,
nor die

The sweet wise death of old men hon-
orable,

Who have lived out all the length of all
their years

Blameless, and seen well-pleased the
face of gods,

And without shame and without fear
have wrought

Things memorable, and while their days
held out

In sight of all men and the sun's great
light

Have gat them glory and given of their
own praise

To the earth that bore them and the day
that bred,

Home friends and far-off hospitalities,

And filled with gracious and memorial
fame

Lands loved of summer or waded by
violent seas,

Towns populous and many unooted
ways,

And alien lips and native with their
own.

But when white age and venerable
death

Mow down the strength and life within
their limbs,

Drain out the blood and darken their
clear eyes,

Immortal honor is on them, having
past

Through splendid life and death desir-
able

To the clear seat and remote throne of
souls,

Lands indiscoverable in the unheard-
of west,

Round which the strong stream of a
sacred sea

Rolls without wind forever, and the
snow

There shows not her white wings and
windy feet,

Nor thunder nor swift rain saith any
thing,

Nor the sun burns, but all things rest
and thrive;

And these, filled full of days, divine and
dead,

Sages and singers fiery from the god,
And such as loved their land and all

things good

And, best beloved of best men, liberty,
Free lives and lips, free hands of men

free-born,

And whatsoever on earth was honora-
ble

And whosoever of all the ephemeral
seed,

Live there a life no liker to the gods
But nearer than their life of terrene

days.

Love thou such life, and look for such
a death.

But from the light and fiery dreams of
love

Spring heavy sorrows and a sleepless
life,

Visions not dreams, whose lids no
 charm shall close,
 Nor song assuage them waking; and
 swift death
 Crushes with sterile feet the unripening
 ear,
 Treads out the timeless vintage; whom
 do thou
 Eschewing embrace the luck of this thy
 life,
 Not without honor; and it shall bear
 to thee
 Such fruit as men reap from spent hours
 and wear,
 Few men, but happy; of whom be thou,
 O son,
 Happiest, if thou submit thy soul to
 fate,
 And set thine eyes and heart on hopes
 high-born
 And divine deeds and abstinence divine.
 So shalt thou be toward all men all thy
 days
 As light and might communicable, and
 burn
 From heaven among the stars above
 the hours,
 And break not as a man breaks nor
 burn down:
 For to whom other of all heroic names
 Have the gods given his life in hand as
 thine?
 And gloriously hast thou lived, and
 made thy life
 To me that bare thee and to all men
 born
 Thankworthy, a praise forever; and
 hast won fame
 When wild wars broke all round thy
 father's house,
 And the mad people of windy mountain
 ways
 Laid spears against us like a sea, and
 all
 Ætolia thundered with Thessalian
 hoofs;
 Yet these, as wind baffles the foam, and
 beats
 Straight back the relaxed ripple, didst
 thou break
 And loosen all their lances, till undone
 And man from man they fell; for ye
 twain stood

God against god, Ares and Artemis,
 And thou the mightier, wherefore she
 unleashed
 A sharp-toothed curse thou too shalt
 overcome;
 For in the greener blossom of thy life
 Ere the full blade caught flower, and
 when time gave
 Respite, thou didst not slacken soul nor
 sleep,
 But with great hand and heart seek
 praise of men
 Out of sharp straits and many a grievous
 thing,
 Seeing the strange foam of undivided
 seas
 On channels never sailed in, and by
 shores
 Where the old winds cease not blowing,
 and all the night
 Thunders, and day is no delight to
 men.

Chorus. Meleager, a noble wisdom
 and fair words

The gods have given this woman: hear
 thou these.

Meleager. O mother, I am not fain to
 strive in speech

Nor set my mouth against thee, who art
 wise

Even as they say, and full of sacred
 words.

But one thing I know surely, and cleave
 to this;

That though I be not subtle of wit as
 thou

Nor womanlike to weave sweet words,
 and melt

Mutable minds of wise men as with
 fire,

I too, doing justly and reverencing the
 gods,

Shall not want wit to see what things
 be right.

For whom they love and whom reject,
 being gods,

There is no man but seeth, and in good
 time

Submits himself, refraining all his heart.
 And I too, as thou sayest, have seen

great things;
 Seen elsewhere, but chiefly when the
 sail

First caught between stretched ropes
 the roaring west,
 And all our oars smote eastward, and
 the wind
 First flung round faces of seafaring men
 White splendid snow-flakes of the sun-
 dering foam,
 And the first furrow in virginal green
 sea
 Followed the plunging ploughshare of
 hewn pine,
 And closed, as when deep sleep sub-
 duces man's breath
 Lips close and heart subsides; and clos-
 ing, shone
 Sunlike with many a Nereid's hair, and
 moved
 Round many a trembling mouth of
 doubtful gods,
 Risen out of sunless and sonorous gulfs
 Through waning water and into shallow
 light,
 That watched us; and when flying the
 dove was snared
 As with men's hands, but we shot after
 and sped
 Clear through the irremeable Symple-
 gades;
 And chieflyest when hoar beach and
 herbless cliff
 Stood out ahead from Colchis, and we
 heard
 Clefts hoarse with wind, and saw through
 narrowing reefs
 The lightning of the intolerable wave
 Flash, and the white wet flame of break-
 ers burn
 Far under a kindling south-wind, as a
 lamp
 Burns and bends all its blowing flame
 one way;
 Wild heights untravell'd of the wind,
 and vales
 Cloven seaward by their violent streams,
 and white
 With bitter flowers and bright salt scurf
 of brine;
 Heard sweep their sharp swift gales, and
 bowing birdwise
 Shriek with birds' voices, and with furi-
 ous feet
 Tread loose the long skirts of a storm;
 and saw

The whole white Euxine clash^{no} together
 and fall
 Full-mouthed, and thunderous^{se} is from a
 thousand throats
 Yet we drew thither, and won^{no} the fleece,
 and won
 Medea, deadlier than the h^t sea; but
 there
 Seeing many a wonder, ar^{na}id fearfu
 things to men,
 I saw not one thing like this^{vi} one see
 here,
 Most fair and fearful, feminine, the a god,
 Faultless; whom I that love not, ng bein
 unlike,
 Fear, and give honor, and choose from
 all the gods.
Æneus. Lady, the daughter of Thes-
 tius, and thou, son,
 Not ignorant of your strife nor light of
 wit,
 Scared with vain dreams and fluttering
 like spent fire,
 I come to judge between you, but a
 king
 Full of past days and wise from years
 endured.
 Nor thee I praise, who art fain to undo
 things done:
 Nor thee, who art swift to esteem them
 overmuch.
 For what the hours have given is given,
 and this
 Changeless; howbeit these change, and
 in good time
 Devise new things and good, not one
 thing still.
 Us have they sent now, at our need for
 help,
 Among men armed a woman, foreign
 born,
 Virgin, not like the natural flower of
 things
 That grows and bears, and brings forth
 fruit, and dies;
 Unlovable, no light for a husband's
 house,
 Espoused; a glory among unwedded
 girls,
 And chosen of gods who reverence
 maidenhood.
 These too we honor in honoring her
 but thou,

Abstain thy feet from following, and
thine eyes

From amorous touch; nor set toward
hers thine heart,

Son, lest hate bear no deadlier fruit
than love.

Althæa. O king, thou art wise, but
wisdom halts; and just,

But the gods love not justice more than
fate,

And smite the righteous and the violent
mouth,

And mix with insolent blood the rever-
ent man's,

And bruise the holier as the lying lips.
Enough; for wise words fail me, and

my heart
Takes fire and trembles flamewise, O

my son,
O child, for thine head's sake; mine

eyes wax thick,
Turning toward thee, so goodly a weap-

oned man,
So glorious; and for love of thine own

eyes
They are darkened, and tears burn

them, fierce as fire,
And my lips pause and my soul sinks

with love.
But by thine hand, by thy sweet life

and eyes,
By thy great heart and these clasped

knees, O son,
I pray thee that thou slay me not with

thee.
For there was never a mother woman-

born
Loved her sons better; and never a

queen of men
More perfect in her heart toward whom

she loved.
For what lies light on many and they

forget,
Small things and transitory as a wind

o' the sea,
I forget never; I have seen thee all

thine years
A man in arms, strong and a joy to

men
Seeing thine head glitter and thine

hand burn its way
Through a heavy and iron furrow of

sundering spears;

But always also a flower of three suns
old,

The small one thing that lying drew
down my life

To lie with thee and feed thee; a child
and weak,

Mine, a delight to no man, sweet to
me.

Who then sought to thee? who gat
help? who knew

If thou wert goodly? nay, no man at
all.

Or what sea saw thee, or sounded with
thine oar,

Child? or what strange land shone
with war through thee?

But fair for me thou wert, O little life,
Fruitless, the fruit of mine own flesh,

and blind,
More than much gold, ungrown, a fool-

ish flower.
For silver nor bright snow nor feather

of foam
Was whiter, and no gold yellower than

thine hair,
O child, my child; and now thou art

lordlier grown,
Not lovelier, nor a new thing in mine

eyes,
I charge thee by thy soul and this my

breast,
Fear thou the gods and me and thine

own heart,
Lest all these turn against thee; for

who knows
What wind upon what wave of altering

time
Shall speak a storm and blow calamity?

And there is nothing stabile in the
world

But the gods break it; yet not less, fair
son,

If but one thing be stronger, if one en-
dure,

Surely the bitter and the rooted love
That burns between us, going from me

to thee,
Shall more endure than all things.

What dost thou,
Following strange loves? why wilt thou

kill mine heart?
Lo, I talk wild and windy words, and

fall

From my clear wits, and seem of mine
 own self
 Dethroned, dispraised, dis-seated; and
 my mind,
 That was my crown, breaks, and mine
 heart is gone,
 And I am naked of my soul, and stand
 Ashamed, as a mean woman; take thou
 thought:
 Live if thou wilt, and if thou wilt not,
 look,
 The gods have given thee lite to lose
 or keep,
 Thou shalt not die as men die, but
 thine end
 Fallen upon thee shall break me un-
 aware.

Meleager. Queen, my whole heart is
 molten with thy tears,
 And my limbs yearn with pity of thee,
 and love
 Compels with grief mine eyes and la-
 boring breath:
 For what thou art I know thee, and
 this thy breast
 And thy fair eyes I worship, and am
 bound
 Toward thee in spirit and love thee in
 all my soul.
 For there is nothing terribler to men
 Than the sweet face of mothers, and
 the night.
 But what shall be, let be; for us the day
 Once only lives a little, and is not found.
 Time and the fruitful hour are more
 than we,
 And these lay hold upon us; but thou,
 God,
 Zeus, the sole steersman of the helm of
 things,
 Father, be swift to see us, and as thou
 wilt
 Help: or if adverse, as thou wilt,
 refrain.
Chorus. We have seen thee, O Love,
 thou art fair; thou art goodly, O
 Love;
 Thy wings make light in the air as the
 wings of a dove.
 Thy feet are as winds that divide the
 stream of the sea;
 Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the
 garment of thee.

Thou art swift and subtle and blind
 a flame of fire;
 Before thee the laughter, behind thee
 the tears of desire;
 And twain go forth beside thee, a man
 with a maid;
 Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whose
 delight makes afraid;
 As the breath in the buds that stir in
 her bridal breath:
 But Fate is the name of her; and his
 name is Death.

For an evil blossom was born
 Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,
 Blood-red and bitter of fruit,
 And the seed of it laugh, hater and
 tears,
 And the leaves of it madness and scorn:
 A bitter flower from the bud,
 Sprung of the sea without root,
 Sprung without graft from
 years.

The west of the world was unturn
 That is woven of the day on the
 night,
 The hair of the hours was not white
 Nor the raiment of time overworn,
 When a wonder, a world's delight,
 A perilous goddess was born;
 And the waves of the sea as she came
 Clove, and the foam at her feet,
 Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth
 A fleshly blossom, a flame
 Filling the heavens with heat
 To the cold white ends of the north.

And in air the clamorous birds,
 And men upon earth that hear
 Sweet articulate words
 Sweetly divided apart,
 And in shallow and channel and mere
 The rapid and footless herds,
 Rejoiced, being foolish of heart.

For all they said upon earth,
 She is fair, she is white like a dove,
 And the life of the world in her
 breath
 Breathes, and is born at her birth,
 For they knew thee for mother of love,
 And knew thee not mother of death.

What hadst thou to do being born,
 Mother, when winds were at ease,
 As a flower of the springtime of corn,
 A flower of the foam of the seas?
 Or bitter thou wast from thy birth,
 Aphrodite, a mother of strife;
 Or before thee some rest was on earth,
 A little respite from tears,
 A little pleasure of life;
 Or life was not then as thou art,
 But as one that waxeth in years
 Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife;
 Earth had no thorn, and desire
 No sting, neither death any dart;
 What hadst thou to do amongst
 these,
 Thou, clothed with a burning fire,
 Thou, girt with sorrow of heart,
 Thou, sprung of the seed of the
 seas
 As an ear from a seed of corn,
 As a brand plucked forth of a pyre,
 As a ray shed forth of the morn,
 For division of soul and disease,
 For a dart and a sting and a thorn?
 What ailed thee then to be born?

Was there not evil enough,
 Mother, and anguish on earth
 Born with a man at his birth,
 Wastes underfoot, and above
 Storm out of heaven, and dearth
 Shaken down from the shining thereof,
 Wrecks from afar overseas
 And peril of shallow and firth,
 And tears that spring and increase
 In the barren places of mirth,
 That thou, having wings as a dove,
 Being girt with desire for a girth,
 That thou must come after these,
 That thou must lay on him love?

Thou shouldst not so have been born:
 But death should have risen with
 thee,
 Mother, and visible fear,
 Grief, and the wringing of hands,
 And noise of many that mourn;
 The smitten bosom, the knee
 Bowed, and in each man's ear
 A cry as of perishing lands,
 A moan as of people in prison,
 A tumult of infinite griefs;

And thunder of storm on the
 sands,
 And wailing of wives on the shore;
 And under thee newly arisen
 Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs,
 Fierce air and violent light;
 Sail rent and sundering oar,
 Darkness, and noises of night;
 Clashing of streams in the sea,
 Wave against wave as a sword,
 Clamor of currents, and foam;
 Rains making ruin on earth,
 Winds that wax ravenous and roam
 As wolves in a wolfish horde;
 Fruits growing faint in the tree,
 And blind things dead in their
 birth:
 Famine, and blighting of corn,
 When thy time was come to be
 born.

All these we know of; but thee
 Who shall discern or declare?
 In the uttermost ends of the sea
 The light of thine eyelids and hair,
 The light of thy bosom as fire
 Between the wheel of the sun
 And the flying flames of the air?
 Wilt thou turn thee not yet nor
 have pity,
 But abide with despair and desire
 And the crying of armies undone,
 Lamentation of one with another
 And breaking of city by city;
 The dividing of friend against friend,
 The severing of brother and
 brother;
 Wilt thou utterly bring to an end?
 Have mercy, mother!

For against all men from of old
 Thou hast set thine hand as a curse,
 And cast out gods from their places
 These things are spoken of thee.
 Strong kings and goodly with gold
 Thou hast found out arrows to pierce,
 And made their kingdoms and races
 As dust and surf of the sea.
 All these, overburdened with woes
 And with length of their days waxen
 weak,
 Thou slewest; and sentest more
 over

Upon Tyro an evil thing,
 Rent hair and a fetter and blows
 Making bloody the flower of the
 cheek,
 Though she lay by a god as a
 lover,
 Though fair, and the seed of a
 king.

For of old, being full of thy fire,
 She endured not longer to wear
 On her bosom a saffron vest,
 On her shoulder an ashwood
 quiver;
 Being mixed and made one through
 desire

With Enipeus, and all her hair
 Made moist with his mouth, and
 her breast

Filled full of the foam of the
 river.

Atalanta. Sun, and clear light among
 green hills, and day

Late risen and long sought after, and
 you just gods

Whose hands divide anguish and rec-
 ompense,

But first the sun's white sister, a maid
 in heaven,

On earth of all maids worshipped—
 hail, and hear,

And witness with me if not without sign
 sent,

Not without rule and reverence, I a
 maid

Hallowed, and huntress holy as whom
 I serve,

Here in your sight and eyeshot of these
 men

Stand, girt as they toward hunting, and
 my shafts

Drawn; wherefore all ye stand up on
 my side,

If I be pure and all ye righteous gods,
 Lest one revile me, a woman, yet no
 wife,

That bear a spear for spindle, and this
 bow strung

For a web woven; and with pure lips
 salute

Heaven, and the face of all the gods,
 and dawn

Filling with maiden flames and maiden
 flowers

The starless fold o' the stars, and mak-
 ing sweet

The warm wan heights of the air, moon-
 trodden ways

And breathless gates and extreme hills
 of heaven.

Whom, having offered water and blood-
 less gifts,

Flowers, and a golden circlet of pure
 hair,

Next Artemis I bid be favorable

And make this day all golden, hers and
 ours,

Gracious and good and white to the
 unblamed end.

But thou, O well-beloved, of all my
 days

Bid it be fruitful, and a crown for all,
 To bring forth leaves and bind round
 all my hair

With perfect chaplets woven for thine
 of thee.

For not without the word of thy chaste
 mouth,

For not without law given and clean
 command,

Across the white straits of the running
 sea

From Elis even to the Acheloïan horn,
 I with clear winds came hither and gen-
 tle gods,

Far off my father's house, and left un-
 cheered

Iasius, and uncheered the Arcadian hills
 And all their green-haired waters, and
 all woods

Disconsolate, to hear no horn of mine
 Blown, and behold no flash of swift
 white feet.

Melager. For thy name's sake and
 awe toward thy chaste head,

O holiest Atalanta, no man dares

Praise thee, though fairer than whom
 all men praise,

And godlike for thy grace of hallowed
 hair

And holy habit of thine eyes, and feet
 That make the blown foam neither
 swift nor white

Though the wind winnow and whirl it,
 yet we praise

Gods, found because of thee adora-
 ble

And for thy sake praiseworthyest from
all men:

Thee therefore we praise also, thee as
these,

Pure, and a light lit at the hands of
gods.

Toxæus. How long will ye whet spears
with eloquence,

Fight, and kill beasts dry-handed with
sweet words?

Cease, or talk still and slay thy boars
at home.

Plexippus. Why, if she ride among
us for a man,

Sit thou for her and spin; a man grown
girl

Is worth a woman weaponed; sit thou
here.

Meleager. Peace, and be wise; no
gods love idle speech.

Plexippus. Nor any man a man's
mouth woman-tongued.

Meleager. For my lips bite not sharp-
er than mine hands.

Plexippus. Nay, both bite soft, but
no whit softly mine.

Meleager. Keep thine hands clean;
they have time enough to stain.

Plexippus. For thine shall rest and
wax not red to-day.

Meleager. Have all thy will of words;
talk out thine heart.

Althæa. Refrain your lips, O brethren,
and my son,

Lest words turn snakes and bite you
uttering them.

Toxæus. Except she give her blood
before the gods,

What profit shall a maid be among
men?

Plexippus. Let her come crowned and
stretch her throat for a knife,

Bleat out her spirit, and die, and so shall
men

Through her too prosper and through
prosperous gods;

But nowise through her living; shall
she live

A flower-bud of the flower-bed, or sweet
fruit

For kisses and the honey-making mouth,
And play the shield for strong men and

the spear?

Then shall the heifer and her mate loc
horns,

And the bride overbear the groom, and
men

Gods; for no less division sunders these,
Since all things made are seasonable in

time,
But if one alter unseasonable are all.

But thou, O Zeus, hear me that I may
slay

This beast before thee and no man
halve with me

Nor woman, lest these mock thee,
though a god,

Who hast made men strong, and thou
being wise be held

Foolish; for wise is that thing which
endures.

Atalanta. Men, and the chosen of all
this people, and thou,

King, I beseech you, a little bear with
me.

For if my life be shameful that I live,
Let the gods witness, and their wrath;

but these
Cast no such word against me. Thou,

O mine,
O holy, O happy goddess, if I sin

Changing the words of women and the
works

For spears and strange men's faces,
hast not thou

One shaft of all thy sudden seven that
pierced

Seven through the bosom or shining
throat or side,

All couched about one mother's loosen-
ing knees,

All holy born, engrafted of Tantalus?
But if toward any of you I am over

bold
That take thus much upon me, let him

think
How I, for all my forest holiness,

Fame, and this armed and iron maiden-
hood,

Pay thus much also; I shall have no
man's love

Forever, and no face of children born
Or feeding lips upon me or fastening

eyes
Forever, nor being dead shall kings my

sons

Mourn me and bury, and tears on
daughters' cheeks
Burn; but a cold and sacred life, but
strange,
But far from dances and the back-
blowing torch,
Far off from flowers or any bed of man,
Shall my life be forever: me the snows
That face the first o' the morning, and
cold hills
Full of the land-wind and sea-travelling
storms
And many a wandering wing of noisy
nights
That know the thunder and hear the
thickening wolves —
Me the utmost pine and footless frost
of woods
That talk with many winds and gods,
the hours
Re-risen, and white divisions of the
dawn,
Springs thousand-tongued with the in-
termitting reed,
And streams that murmur of the mother
snow —
Me these allure, and know me; but no
man
Knows, and my goddess only. Lo
now, see
If one of all you these things vex at all.
Would God that any of you had all the
praise
And in no manner of memory when I
die,
So might I show before her perfect eyes
Pure, whom I follow, a maiden to my
death.
But for the rest let all have all they
will;
For is it a grief to you that I have part,
Being woman merely, in your male
might and deeds
Done by main strength? yet in my body
is throned
As great a heart, and in my spirit, O
men,
I have not less of godlike. Evil it were
That one a coward should mix with you,
one hand
Fearful, one eye abase itself; and these
Well might ye hate and well revile, not
me.

For not the difference of the several
flesh
Being vile or noble or beautiful or base
Makes praiseworthy, but purer spirit
and heart
Higher than these meaner mouths and
limbs, that feed,
Rise, rest, and are and are not; and for
me,
What should I say? but by the gods of
the world
And this my maiden body, by all oaths
That bind the tongue of men and the
evil will,
I am not mighty-minded, nor desire
Crowns, nor the spoil of slain things
nor the fame;
Feed ye on these, eat and wax fat; cry
out,
Laugh, having eaten, and leap without
a lyre;
Sing, mix the wind with clamor, smile
and shake
Sonorous timbrels and tumultuous hair,
And fill the dance up with tempestuous
feet.
For I will none; but having prayed my
prayers
And made thank-offering for prosperi-
ties,
I shall go hence, and no man see me
more.
What thing is this for you to shout me
down,
What, for a man to grudge me this my
life
As it were envious of all yours, and I
A thief of reputations? nay, for now,
If there be any highest in heaven, a god
Above all thrones and thunders of the
gods
Throned, and the wheel of the world
roll under him,
Judge he between me and all of you, and
see
If I transgress at all: but ye, refrain
Transgressing hands and reinless
mouths, and keep
Silence, lest by much foam of violent
words
And proper poison of your lips ye die.
(Æneus.) O flower of Tegea, maiden,
fleetest foot

And holiest head of women, have good
cheer
Of thy good words: but ye, depart with
her
In peace and reverence, each with
blameless eye
Following his fate; exalt your hands
and hearts,
Strike, cease not, arrow on arrow and
wound on wound,
And go with gods, and with the gods
return.

Chorus. Who hath given man speech?
or who hath set therein

A thorn for peril and a snare for
sin?

For in the word his life is and his
breath,

And in the word his death,
'That madness and the infatuate heart
may breed

From the word's womb the deed
And life bring one thing forth ere 'all
pass by,

Even one thing which is ours yet can-
not die,—

Death. Hast thou seen him ever any-
where,

Time's twin-born brother, imperishable
as he

Is perishable and plaintive, clothed
with care

And mutable as sand,
But death is strong and full of blood
and fair

And perdurable and like a lord of
land?

Nay, time thou seest not, death thou
wilt not see

Till life's right hand be loosened from
thine hand,

And thy life-days from thee.
For the gods very subtly fashion

Madness with sadness upon earth:
Not knowing in any wise compassion,

Nor holding pity of any worth;
And many things they have given and
taken,

And wrought and ruined many things;
The firm land have they loosed and
shaken,

And sealed the sea with all her
springs;

They have wearied time with heavy
burdens,

And vexed the lips of life with breath:
Set men to labor and given them guer-
dons,

Death, and great darkness after death:
Put moans into the bridal measure

And on the bridal wools a stain;
And circled pain about with pleasure,

And girdled pleasure about with pain:
And strewed one marriage-bed with
tears and fire

For extreme loathing and supreme de-
sire.

What shall be done with all these tears
of ours?

Shall they make water-springs in the
fair heaven

To bathe the brows of morning? or like
flowers

Be shed and shine before the starriest
hours,

Or made the raiment of the weeping
Seven?

Or rather, O our masters, shall they be
Food for the famine of the grievous sea.

A great well-head of lamentation
Satiating the sad gods? or fall and flow

Among the years and seasons to an
fro,

And wash their feet with tribulation
And fill them full with grieving ere
they go?

Alas, our lords, and yet alas again!
Seeing all your iron heaven is gilt as
gold

But all we smite thereat in vain;
Smite the gates barred with groanings
manifold,

But all the floors are paven with our
pain.

Yea, and with weariness of lips and
eyes,

With breaking of the bosom, and with
sighs,

We labor, and are clad and fed with
grief

And filled with days we would not fain
behold

And nights we would not hear of; we
wax old,

All we wax old and wither like a leaf.

We are outcast, strayed between bright
sun and moon;
Our light and darkness are as leaves
of flowers,
Black flowers and white, that perish;
and the noon
As midnight, and the night as day-
light hours.
A little fruit a little while is ours,
And the worm finds it soon.

But up in heaven the high gods one by
one
Lay hands upon the draught that
quickeneth,
Fulfilled with all tears shed and all
things done,
And stir with soft imperishable breath
The bubbling bitterness of life and
death,
And hold it to our lips, and laugh; but
they
Preserve their lips from tasting night
or day,
Lest they too change and sleep, the
fates that spun,
The lips that made us and the hands
that slay;
Lest all these change, and heaven
bow down to none,
Change and be subject to the secular
sway
And terrene revolution of the sun.
Therefore they thrust it from them,
putting time away.

I would the wine of time, made sharp
and sweet
With multitudinous days and nights
and tears
And many mixing saviors of strange
years,
Were no more trodden of them under
feet,
Cast out and spilt about their holy
places:
That life were given them as a fruit to eat
And death to drink as water; that the
light
Might ebb, drawn backward from their
eyes, and night
Hide for one hour the imperishable
faces.

That they might rise up sad in heaven,
and know
Sorrow and sleep, one paler than young
snow,
One cold as blight of dew and ruinous
rain;
Rise up and rest and suffer a little, and
be
Awhile as all things born with us and
we,
And grieve as men, and like slain
men be slain.

For now we know not of them; but
one saith
The gods are gracious, praising God;
and one,
When hast thou seen? or hast thou felt
his breath
Touch, nor consume thine eyelids as
the sun,
Nor fill thee to the lips with fiery death?
None hath beheld him, none
Seen above other gods and shapes of
things,
Swift without feet and flying without
wings,
Intolerable, not clad with death or life,
Insatiable, not known of night or
day,
The lord of love and loathing and of
strife,
Who gives a star, and takes a sun
away;
Who shapes the soul, and makes her a
barren wife
To the earthly body and grievous
growth of clay;
Who turns the large limbs to a little
flame,
And binds the great sea with a little
sand;
Who makes desire, and slays desire
with shame;
Who shakes the heaven as ashes in
his hand;
Who, seeing the light and shadow for
the same,
Bids day waste night as fire devours
a brand,
Smites without sword, and scourges
without rod,—
The supreme evil, God.

Yea, with thine hate, O God, thou hast covered us,
 One saith, and hidden our eyes away from sight,
 And made us transitory and hazardous,
 Light things and slight;
 Yet have men praised thee, saying, He nath made man thus,
 And he doeth right.
 Thou hast kissed us, and hast smitten; thou hast laid
 Upon us with thy left hand life, and said, Live: and again thou hast said, Yield up your breath,
 And with thy right hand laid upon us death.
 Thou hast sent us sleep, and stricken sleep with dreams,
 Saying, Joy is not, but love of joy shall be;
 Thou hast made sweet springs for all the pleasant streams,
 In the end thou hast made them bitter with the sea.
 Thou hast fed one rose with dust of many men;
 Thou hast marred one face with fire of many tears;
 Thou hast taken love, and given us sorrow again;
 With pain thou hast filled us full to the eyes and ears.
 Therefore because thou art strong, our father, and we
 Feeble; and thou art against us, and thine hand
 Constrains us in the shallows of the sea
 And breaks us at the limits of the land;
 Because thou hast bent thy lightnings as a bow,
 And loosed the hours like arrows; and let fall
 Sins and wild words and many a wingèd woe
 And wars among us, and one end of all;
 Because thou hast made the thunder, and thy feet
 Are as a rushing water when the skies Break, but thy face as an exceeding heat,
 And flames of fire the eyelids of thine eyes;

Because thou art over all who are over us;
 Because thy name is life, and our name death;
 Because thou art cruel, and men are piteous,
 And our hands labor, and thine hand scattereth:
 Lo, with hearts rent and knees made tremulous,
 Lo, with ephemeral lips and casual breath,
 At least we witness of thee ere we die
 That these things are not otherwise, but thus;
 That each man in his heart sigheth, and saith,
 That all men even as I,
 All we are against thee, against thee, O God most high.
 But ye, keep ye on earth
 Your lips from over-speech,
 Loud words and longing are so little worth;
 And the end is hard to reach.
 For silence after grievous things is good,
 And reverence, and the fear that makes men whole,
 And shame, and righteous governance of blood,
 And lordship of the soul.
 But from sharp words and wits men pluck no fruit,
 And gathering thorns they shake the tree at root;
 For words divide and rend;
 But silence is most noble till the end.
Althæa. I heard within the house a cry of news,
 And came forth eastward hither, where the dawn
 Cheers first these warder gods that face the sun,
 And next our eyes unrisen; for unaware
 Came clashes of swift hoofs and trampling feet,
 And through the windy pillared corridor
 Light sharper than the frequent flames of day
 That daily fill it from the fiery dawn;

Gleams, and a thunder of people that
cried out,
And dust and hurrying horsemen; lo
their chief,
That rode with Ceneus rein by rein,
returned.
What cheer, O herald of my lord the
king?

Herald. Lady, good cheer and great:
the boar is slain.

Chorus. Praised be all gods that look
toward Calydon.

Althea. Good news and brief; but
by whose happier hand?

Herald. A maiden's and a prophet's
and thy son's.

Althea. Well fare the spear that
severed him and life.

Herald. Thine own, and not an alien,
hast thou blest.

Althea. Twice be thou too for my
sake blest and his.

Herald. At the king's word I rode
afoam for thine.

Althea. Thou sayest he tarrieth till
they bring the spoil?

Herald. Hard by the quarry, where
they breathe, O queen.

Althea. Speak thou their chance;
but some bring flowers, and
crown

These gods and all the lintel, and shed
wine,

Fetch sacrifice and slay; for Heaven is
good.

Herald. Some furlongs northward
where the brakes begin,

West of that narrowing range of war-
rior hills

Whose brooks have bled with battle
when thy son

Smote Acarnania, there all they made
halt,

And with keen eye took note of spear
and hound,

Royally ranked: Laertes island-born,
The young Gerenian Nestor, Panopeus,
And Cepheus and Ancæus, mightiest
thewed,

Arcadians; next, and evil-eyed of these,
Arcadian Atalanta, with twain hounds
lengthening the leash, and under nose
and brow

Glittering with lipless tooth and fire-
swift eye;

But from her white braced shoulder the
plumed shafts

Rang, and the bow shone from her
side; next her

Meleager, like a sun in spring that
strikes

Branch into leaf and bloom into the
world,

A glory among men meaner; Iphicles,
And following him that slew the biform
bull

Pirithous, and divine Eurytion,

And, bride-bound to the gods, Æacides;
Then Telamon his brother, and Argive-
born

The seer and sayer of visions and of
truth,

Amphiaras; and a fourfold strength,

Thine, even thy mother's and thy sis-
ter's sons;

And recent from the roar of foreign
foam

Jason, and Dryas twin-begot with war,
A blossom of bright battle, sword and
man

Shining; and Idas; and the keenest
eye

Of Lynceus; and Admetus twice-es-
poused;

And Hippasus and Hyleus, great in
heart.

These having halted bade blow horns,
and rode

Through woods and waste lands cleft
by stormy streams,

Past yew-trees and the heavy hair of
pines,

And where the dew is thickest under
oaks,

This way and that; but questing up
and down

They saw no trail, nor scented; and
one said, —

Plexippus, — Help, or help not, Arte-
mis,

And we will slay thy boar-skin with
male hands;

But saying, he ceased and said not that
he would,

Seeing where the green ooze of a sun-
struck marsh

Shook with a thousand reeds untunable,
 And in their moist and multitudinous
 flower
 Slept no soft sleep, with violent visions
 fed,
 The blind bulk of the immeasurable
 beast.
 And seeing, he shuddered with sharp
 lust of praise
 Through all his limbs, and launched a
 double dart,
 And missed; for much desire divided
 him,
 Too hot of spirit and feebler than his
 will,
 That his hand failed, though fervent;
 and the shaft,
 Sundering the rushes, in a tamarisk stem
 Shook, and stuck fast. Then all abode
 save one,
 The Arcadian Atalanta: from her side
 Sprang her hounds, laboring at the
 leash, and slipped,
 And plashed ear-deep with plunging
 feet; but she,
 Saying, Speed it as I send it for thy
 sake,
 Goddess, drew bow and loosed; the
 sudden string
 Rang, and sprang inward, and the
 waterish air
 Hissed, and the moist plumes of the
 songless reeds
 Moved as a wave which the wind moves
 no more.
 But the boar heaved half out of ooze
 and slime
 His tense flank trembling round the
 barbed wound,
 Hateful; and fiery with invasive eyes
 And bristling with intolerable hair
 Plunged, and the hounds clung, and
 green flowers and white
 Reddened and broke all round them
 where they came.
 And charging with sheer tusk he drove,
 and smote
 Hyleus; and sharp death caught his
 sudden soul,
 And violent sleep shed night upon his
 eyes.
 Then Peleus, with strong strain of hand
 and heart,

Shot; but the sidelong arrow slid, and
 slew
 His comrade born and loving country-
 man,
 Under the left arm smitten, as he no
 less
 Poised a like arrow; and bright blood
 brake afoam,
 And falling, and weighed back by clam-
 orous arms,
 Sharp rang the dead limbs of Eurytion
 Then one shot happier, the Cadmean
 seer,
 Amphiaras; for his sacred shaft
 Pierced the red circlet of one ravening
 eye
 Beneath the brute brows of the san-
 guine boar,
 Now bloodier from one slain; but he
 so galled
 Sprang straight, and rearing cried no
 lesser cry
 Than thunder and the roar of winter-
 ing streams
 That mix their own foam with the yel-
 lower sea;
 And as a tower that falls by fire in
 fight
 With ruin of walls and all its archery,
 And breaks the iron flower of wa-
 beneath,
 Crushing charred limbs and molten
 arms of men;
 So through crushed branches and the
 reddening brake
 Clamored and crashed the fervor of
 his feet,
 And trampled, springing sideways from
 the tusk,
 Too tardy a moving mould of heavy
 strength,
 Ancæus; and as flakes of weak-winged
 snow
 Break, all the hard thews of his heav-
 ing limbs
 Broke, and rent flesh fell every way,
 and blood
 Flew, and fierce fragments of no more
 a man.
 Then all the heroes drew sharp breath,
 and gazed,
 And smote not; but Meleager, but thy
 son,

Right in the wild way of the coming
 curse
 Rock-rooted, fair with fierce and fast-
 ened lips,
 Clear eyes, and springing muscle and
 shortening limb—
 With chin aslant indrawn to a tighten-
 ing throat,
 Grave, and with gathered sinews, like
 a god,—
 Aimed on the left side his well-handled
 spear
 Grasped where the ash was knottiest
 hewn, and smote,
 And with no missile wound, the mon-
 strous boar
 Right in the hairiest hollow of his hide
 Under the last rib, sheer through bulk
 and bone,
 Deep in; and deeply smitten, and to
 death,
 The heavy horror with his hanging
 shafts
 Leapt, and fell furiously, and from
 raging lips
 Foamed out the latest wrath of all his
 life.
 And all they praised the gods with
 mightier heart,
 Zeus and all gods, but chiefest Artemis,
 Seeing; but Meleager bade whet knives
 and flay,
 Strip and stretch out the splendour of
 the spoil;
 And hot and horrid from the work all
 these
 Sat, and drew breath, and drank and
 made great cheer,
 And washed the hard sweat off their
 calmer brows.
 For much sweet grass grew higher than
 grew the reed,
 And good for slumber, and every holier
 herb,
 Narcissus, and the low-lying melilote,
 And all of goodliest blade and bloom
 that springs
 Where, hid by heavier hyacinth, violet
 buds
 Blossom and burn; and fire of yellower
 flowers
 And light of crescent lilies, and such
 leaves

As fear the faun's and know the
 dryad's foot;
 Olive and ivy and poplar dedicate,
 And many a wellspring over-watched of
 these.
 There now they rest; but me the king
 bade bear
 Good tidings to rejoice this town and
 thee.
 Wherefore be glad, and all ye give
 much thanks,
 For fallen is all the trouble of Calydon.
Althæa. Laud ye the gods; for this
 they have given is good,
 And what shall be, they hide until their
 time.
 Much good and somewhat grievous hast
 thou said,
 And either well; but let all sad things
 be,
 Till all have made before the prosperous
 gods
 Burnt-offering, and poured out the floral
 wine.
 Look fair, O gods, and favorable; for
 we
 Praise you with no false heart or flatter-
 ing mouth,
 Being merciful, but with pure souls and
 prayer.
Herald. Thou hast prayed well; for
 whoso fears not these,
 But once being prosperous waxes huge
 of heart,
 Him shall some new thing unaware
 destroy.
Chorus. O that I now, I too were
 By deep wells and water-floods,
 Streams of ancient hills, and where
 All the wan green places bear
 Blossoms cleaving to the sod,
 Fruitless fruit, and grasses fair,
 Or such darkest ivy-buds
 As divide thy yellow hair,
 Bacchus, and their leaves that nod
 Round thy fawnskin brush the bare
 Snow-soft shoulders of a god;
 There the year is sweet, and there
 Earth is full of secret springs,
 And the fervent rose-checked hours
 Those that marry dawn and noon,
 There are sunless, there look pale
 In dim leaves and hidden air,

Pale as grass or latter flowers
 Or the wild vine's wan wet rings
 Full of dew beneath the moon,
 And all day the nightingale
 Sleeps, and all night sings;
 There in cold remote recesses
 That nor alien eyes assail,
 Feet, nor imminence of wings,
 Nor a wind nor any tune,
 Thou, O queen and holiest,
 Flower the whitest of all things,
 With reluctant lengthening tresses
 And with sudden splendid breast
 Save of maidens un beholden,
 There art wont to enter, there
 Thy divine swift limbs and golden
 Maiden growth of unbound hair,
 Bathed in waters white,
 Shine, and many a maid's by thee
 In moist woodland or the hilly
 Flowerless brakes where wells abound
 Out of all men's sight;
 Or in lower pools that see
 All their margs clothed all round
 With the innumerable lily,
 Whence the golden-girdled bee
 Flits through flowering rush to fret
 White or duskier violet,
 Fair as those that in far years
 With their buds left luminous
 And their little leaves made wet
 From the warmer dew of tears,
 Mother's tears in extreme need,
 Hid the limbs of Iamus,
 Of thy brother's seed;
 For his heart was piteous
 Toward him, even as thine heart now
 Pitiful toward us;
 Thine, O goddess, turning hither
 A benignant blameless brow;
 Seeing enough of evil done
 And lives withered as leaves wither
 In the blasting of the sun;
 Seeing enough of hunters dead,
 Ruin enough of all our year,
 Herds and harvests slain and shed,
 Herdsmen stricken many an one,
 Fruits and flocks consumed together,
 And great length of deadly days.
 Yet with reverent lips and fear
 Turn we toward thee, turn and praise
 For this lightening of clear weather
 And prosperities begun.

For not seldom, when all air
 As bright water without breath
 Shines, and when men fear not, fate
 Without thunder unaware
 Breaks, and brings down death.
 Joy with grief ye great gods give,
 Good with bad, and overbear
 All the pride of us that live,
 All the high estate,
 As ye long since overbore,
 As in old time long before,
 Many a strong man and a great,
 All that were.
 But do thou, sweet, otherwise,
 Having heed of all our prayer,
 Taking note of all our sighs;
 We beseech thee by thy light,
 By thy bow, and thy sweet eyes,
 And the kingdom of the night,
 Be thou favorable and fair;
 By thine arrows and thy might
 And Orion overthrown;
 By the maiden thy delight,
 By the indissoluble zone
 And the sacred hair.

Messenger. Maidens, if ye will sing
 now, shift your song,
 Bow down, cry, wait for pity; is this a time
 For singing? nay, for strewing of dust
 and ash,
 Rent raiment, and for bruising of the
 breast.

Chorus. What new thing wolf-like
 lurks behind thy words?
 What snake's tongue in thy lips? what
 fire in the eyes?

Messenger. Bring me before the
 queen, and I will speak.

Chorus. Lo, she comes forth as from
 thank-offering made.

Messenger. A barren offering for a
 bitter gift.

Althæa. What are these borne on
 branches, and the face
 Covered? no mean men living, but now
 slain
 Such honor have they, if any dwell
 with death.

Messenger. Queen, thy twain brethren
 and thy mother's sons.

Althæa. Lay down your dead till I
 behold their blood
 If it be mine indeed, and I will weep.

Messenger. Weep if thou wilt, for these men shall no more.

Althea. O brethren, O my father's sons, of me Well loved and well reputed, I should weep

Tears dearer than the dear blood drawn from you

But that I know you not uncomforted, Sleeping no shameful sleep, however slain,

For my son surely hath avenged you dead.

Messenger. Nay, should thine own seed slay himself, O queen?

Althea. Thy double word brings forth a double death.

Messenger. Know this then singly, by one hand they fell.

Althea. What mutterest thou with thine ambiguous mouth?

Messenger. Slain by thy son's hand: is that saying so hard?

Althea. Our time is come upon us: it is here.

Chorus. O miserable, and spoiled at thine own hand!

Althea. Wert thou not called Me-leager from this womb?

Chorus. A grievous huntsman hath it bred to thee.

Althea. Wert thou born fire, and shalt thou not devour?

Chorus. The fire thou madest, will it consume even thee?

Althea. My dreams are fallen upon me: burn thou too.

Chorus. Not without God are visions born and die.

Althea. The gods are many about me; I am one.

Chorus. She groans as men wrestling with heavier gods.

Althea. They rend me, they divide me, they destroy.

Chorus. Or one laboring in travail of strange births.

Althea. They are strong, they are strong: I am broken, and these prevail.

Chorus. The god is great against her: she will die.

Althea. Yea, but not now; for my heart too is great.

I would I were not here in sight of the sun.

But thou, speak all thou sawest, and I will die.

Messenger. O queen, for queenlike hast thou borne thyself, A little word may hold so great mischance.

For, in division of the sanguine spoil, These men thy brethren wrangling bade yield up

The boar's head and the horror of the hide,

That this might stand a wonder in Calydon,

Hallowed; and some drew toward them; but thy son,

With great hands grasping all that weight of hair,

Cast down the dead heap clanging and collapsed

At female feet, saying, This thy spoil, not mine,

Maiden, thine own hand for thyself hath reaped,

And all this praise God gives thee: she thereat

Laughed, as when dawn touches the sacred night

The sky sees laugh and redden and divide

Dim lips and eyelids virgin of the sun, Hers, and the warm slow breasts of morning heave,

Fruitful, and flushed with flame from lamp-lit hours,

And maiden undulation of clear hair Color the clouds; so laughed she from pure heart

Lit with a low blush to the braided hair,

And rose-colored and cold like very dawn,

Golden and godlike, chastely with chaste lips,

A faint grave laugh; and all they held their peace,

And she passed by them. Then one cried, Lo now,

Shall not the Arcadian shoot out lips at us,

Saying all we were despoiled by this one girl?

And all they rode against her violently,
 And cast the fresh crown from her hair,
 and now
 They had rent her spoil away, dishonor-
 ing her,
 Save that Meleager, as a tame lion
 chafed,
 Bore on them, broke them, and as fire
 cleaves wood
 So clove and drove them, smitten in
 twain; but she
 Smote not nor heaved up hand; and
 this man first,
 Plexippus, crying out, This for love's
 sake, sweet,
 Drove at Meleager, who with spear
 straightening
 Pierced his cheek through; then Toxeus
 made for him,
 Dumb, but his spear spake; vain and
 violent words,
 Fruitless: for him too, stricken through
 both sides
 The earth felt falling, and his horse's
 foam
 Blanched thy son's face, his slayer.
 And these being slain,
 None moved nor spake; but Ceneus
 bade bear hence
 These made of heaven infatuate in
 their deaths,
 Foolish; for these would baffle fate,
 and fell.
 And they passed on, and all men
 honored her,
 Being honorable, as one revered of
 heaven.
Althæa. What say you, women? is
 all this not well done?
Chorus. No man doth well but God
 hath part in him.
Althæa. But no part here; for these
 my brethren born
 Ye have no part in, these ye know not of
 As I that was their sister, a sacrifice
 Slain in their slaying. I would I had
 died for these;
 For this man dead walked with me,
 child by child,
 And made a weak staff for my feeblere
 feet
 With his own tender wrist and hand,
 and held

And led me softly, and showed me gold
 and steel
 And shining shapes of mirror and
 bright crown,
 And all things fair; and threw light
 spears, and brought
 Young hounds to huddle at my feet,
 and thrust
 Tame heads against my little maiden
 breasts,
 And please me with great eyes; and
 those days went,
 And these are bitter, and I a barren
 queen
 And sister miserable, a grievous thing,
 And mother of many curses; and she
 too,
 My sister Leda, sitting overseas
 With fair fruits round her, and her
 faultless lord,
 Shall curse me, saying, A sorrow and
 not a son,
 Sister, thou barest, even a burning fire,
 A brand consuming thine own soul and
 me.
 But ye now, sons of Thestius, make
 good cheer,
 For ye shall have such wood to funeral
 fire
 As no king hath; and flame that once
 burnt down
 Oil shall not quicken, or breath relume,
 or wine
 Refresh again; much costlier than fine
 gold,
 And more than many lives of wander-
 ing men.
Chorus. O queen, thou hast yet with
 thee love-worthy things, —
 Thine husband, and the great strength
 of thy son.
Althæa. Who shall get brothers for
 me while I live?
 Who bear them? who bring forth in
 lieu of these?
 Are not our fathers and our brethren
 one,
 And no man like them? are not mine
 here slain?
 Have we not hung together, he and I,
 Flowerwise feeding as the feeding bees,
 With mother-milk for honey? and this
 man too,

Dead, with my son's spear thrust be-
 tween his sides,
 Hath he not seen us, later born than he,
 Laugh with lips filled, and laughed
 again for love?
 There were no sons then in the world,
 nor spears,
 Nor deadly births of women; but the
 gods
 Allowed us, and our days were clear of
 these.
 I would I had died unwedded, and
 brought forth
 No swords to vex the world; for these
 that spake
 Sweet words long since, and loved me,
 will not speak
 Nor love nor look upon me; and all
 my life
 I shall not hear nor see them living
 men.
 But I too living, how shall I now live?
 What life shall this be with my son, to
 know
 What hath been, and desire what will
 not be,
 Look for dead eyes, and listen for dead
 lips,
 And kill mine own heart with remem-
 bering them,
 And with those eyes that see their
 slayer alive
 Weep, and wring hands that clasp him
 by the hand?
 How shall I bear my dreams of them,
 to hear
 False voices, feel the kisses of false
 mouths
 And footless sound of perished feet,
 and then
 Wake, and hear only, it may be, their
 own hounds
 Whine masterless in miserable sleep,
 And see their boar-spears and their
 beds and seats
 And all the gear and housings of their
 lives
 And not the men? Shall hounds and
 horses mourn,
 Pine with strange eyes, and prick up
 hungry ears,
 Famish and fail at heart for their dear
 lords,

And I not heed at all? and those blind
 things
 Fall off from life for love's sake, and I
 live?
 Surely some death is better than some
 life,
 Better one death for him and these and
 me.
 For, if the gods had slain them, it may
 be
 I had endured it; if they had fallen by
 war,
 Or by the nets and knives of privy death
 And by hired hands while sleeping, this
 thing too
 I had set my soul to suffer; or this hunt,
 Had this despatched them, under tusk
 or tooth
 Torn, sanguine, trodden, broken; for
 all deaths
 Or honorable, or with facile feet
 avenged
 And hands of swift gods following, all
 save this,
 Are bearable. But not for their sweet
 land
 Fighting, but not a sacrifice, to these
 Dead; for I had not then shed all mine
 heart
 Out at mine eyes: then either with good
 speed,
 Being just, I had slain their slayer aton-
 ingly,
 Or strewn with flowers their fire, and on
 their tombs
 Hung crowns, and over them a song,
 and seen
 Their praise outflame their ashes: for
 all men,
 All maidens, had come thither, and
 from pure lips
 Shed songs upon them, from heroic
 eyes
 Tears; and their death had been a
 deathless life;
 But now, by no man hired nor alien
 sword,
 By their own kindred are they fallen, in
 peace,
 After much peril, friendless among
 friends,
 By hateful hands they loved; and how
 shall mine

Touch these returning red and not from
 war,
 These fatal from the vintage of men's
 veins,
 Dead men my brethren? how shall
 these wash off
 No festal stains of undelightful wine,
 How mix the blood, my blood on them,
 with me,
 Holding mine hand? or how shall I
 say, Son,
 That am no sister? But by night and
 day
 Shall we not sit and hate each other,
 and think
 Things hate-worthy? not live with
 shamefast eyes,
 Browbeaten, treading soft with fearful
 feet,
 Each unupbraided, each without rebuke
 Convicted, and without a word reviled
 Each of another? and I shall let thee
 live
 And see thee strong, and hear men for
 thy sake
 Praise me, but these thou wouldest not
 let live
 No man shall praise forever? these
 shall lie
 Dead, unbeloved, unholpen, all through
 thee?
 Sweet were they toward me living, and
 mine heart
 Desired them, but was then well satis-
 fied,
 That now is as men hungered; and
 these dead
 I shall want always to the day I die.
 For all things else and all men may
 renew;
 Yea, son for son the gods may give
 and take,
 But never a brother or sister any more.
Chorus. Nay, for the son lies close
 about thine heart,
 Full of thy milk, warm from thy womb,
 and drains
 Life, and the blood of life, and all thy
 fruit,
 Eats thee and drinks thee as who breaks
 bread and eats,
 Treads wine and drinks, thyself, a sect
 of thee;

And if he feed not, shall not thy flesh
 faint?
 Or drink not, are not thy lips dead for
 thirst?
 This thing moves more than all things,
 even thy son,
 That thou cleave to him; and he shall
 honor thee,
 Thy womb that bare him and the breasts
 he knew,
 Reverencing most for thy sake all his
 gods.
Althæa. But these the gods too gave
 me; and these my son,
 Not reverencing his gods, nor mine own
 heart,
 Nor the old sweet years, nor all venera-
 ble things,
 But cruel, and in his ravin like a beast,
 Hath taken away to slay them: yea,
 and she,
 She the strange woman, she the flower,
 the sword,
 Red from spilt blood, a mortal flower
 to men,
 Adorable, detestable, — even she
 Saw with strange eyes, and with strange
 lips rejoiced,
 Seeing these mine own slain of mine
 own, and me
 Made miserable above all miseries
 made,
 A grief among all women in the world,
 A name to be washed out with all men's
 tears.
Chorus. Strengthen thy spirit: is this
 not also a god,
 Chance, and the wheel of all necessi-
 ties?
 Hard things have fallen upon us from
 harsh gods,
 Whom, lest worse hap, rebuke we not
 for these.
Althæa. My spirit is strong against
 itself, and I
 For these things' sake cry out on mine
 own soul,
 That it endures outrage, and dolorous
 days,
 And life, and this inexpiable impo-
 tence.
 Weak am I, weak and shameful; my
 breath drawn

Shames me, and monstrous things and
 violent gods.
 What shall atone? what heal me? what
 bring back
 Strength to the foot, light to the face?
 what herb
 Assuage me? what restore me? what
 release?
 What strange thing eaten or drunken,
 O great gods,
 Make me as you, or as the beasts that
 feed,
 Slay and divide and cherish their own
 hearts?
 For these ye show us; and we less than
 these
 Have not wherewith to live as all these
 things
 Which all their lives fare after their
 own kind
 As who doth well rejoicing; but we ill,
 Weeping or laughing, we whom eye-
 sight fails,
 Knowledge and light of face and per-
 fect heart,
 And hands we lack, and wit; and all
 our days
 Sin, and have hunger, and die infatu-
 ated.
 For madness have ye given us, and not
 health,
 And sins whereof we know not; and
 for these
 Death, and sudden destruction, un-
 aware.
 What shall we say now? what thing
 comes of us?
Chorus. Alas! for all this all men
 undergo.
Althæa. Wherefore I will not that these
 twain, O gods,
 Die as a dog dies, eaten of creeping
 things,
 Abominable, a loathing; but though
 dead
 Shall they have honor and such func-
 real flame
 As strews men's ashes in their enemies'
 face,
 And blinds their eyes who hate them:
 lest men say,
 "Lo how they lie, and living had great
 kin;

And none of these hath pity of them,
 and none
 Regards them lying, and none is wrung
 at heart,
 None moved in spirit for them, naked
 and slain,
 Abhorred, abased, and no tears comfort
 them;"
 And in the dark this grieve Eurythemis,
 Hearing how these her sons come down
 to her
 Unburied, unavenged, as kinless men,
 And had a queen their sister. That
 were shame
 Worse than this grief. Yet how to
 atone at all
 I know not; seeing the love of my born
 son,
 A new-made mother's new-born love,
 that grows
 From the soft child to the strong man,
 now soft,
 Now strong as either, and still one sole
 same love,
 Strives with me, no light thing to strive
 withal:
 This love is deep, and natural to man's
 blood,
 And ineffaceable with many tears.
 Yet shall not these rebuke me, though
 I die,
 Nor she in that waste world with all
 her dead,
 My mother, among the pale flocks fallen
 as leaves,
 Folds of dead people, and alien from
 the sun;
 Nor lack some bitter comfort, some
 poor praise,
 Being queen, to have borne her daugh-
 ter like a queen
 Righteous; and though mine own fire
 burn me too,
 She shall have honor, and these her
 sons, though dead.
 But all the gods will, all they do, and
 we
 Not all we would, yet somewhat; and
 one choice
 We have, to live and do just deeds and
 die.
Chorus. Terrible words she com-
 munes with, and turns

Swift fiery eyes in doubt against herself,
And murmurs as who talks in dreams
with death.

Althæa. For the unjust also dieth,
and him all men

Hate, and himself abhors the unright-
eousness,

And seeth his own dishonor intoler-
able.

But I being just, doing right upon my-
self,

Slay mine own soul, and no man born
shames me.

For none constrains nor shall rebuke,
being done,

What none compelled me doing; thus
these things fare.

Ah, ah! that such things should so
fare; ah me!

That I am found to do them and endure,
Chosen and constrained to choose, and
bear myself

Mine own wound through mine own
flesh to the heart

Violently stricken, a spoiler and a spoil,
A ruin ruinous, fallen on mine own
son.

Ah, ah! for me too as for these; alas!
For that is done that shall be, and mine
hand

Full of the deed, and full of blood mine
eyes,

That shall see never nor touch any thing
Save blood unstanch'd and fire un-
quenchable.

Chorus. What wilt thou do? what
ails thee? for the house
Shakes ruinously: wilt thou bring fire
for it?

Althæa. Fire in the roofs, and on the
lintels fire.

Lo ye, who stand and weave, between
the doors,

There; and blood drips from hand and
thread, and stains

Threshold and raiment and me passing
in

Flecked with the sudden sanguine drops
of death.

Chorus. Alas that time is stronger
than strong men,

Fate than all gods! and these are fallen
on us.

Althæa. A little since, and I was glad;
and now

I never shall be glad or sad again.

Chorus. Between two joys a grief
grows unaware.

Althæa. A little while, and I shall
laugh; and then

I shall weep never, and laugh not any
more.

Chorus. What shall be said? for
words are thorns to grief.

Withhold thyself a little, and fear the
gods.

Althæa. Fear died when these were
slain; and I am as dead,
And fear is of the living; these fear
none.

Chorus. Have pity upon all people
for their sake.

Althæa. It is done now: shall I put
back my day?

Chorus. An end is come, an end.
this is of God.

Althæa. I am fire, and burn myself:
keep clear of fire.

Chorus. The house is broken, is
broken; it shall not stand.

Althæa. Woe, woe for him that
breaketh; and a rod
Smote it of old, and now the axe is
here.

Chorus. Not as with sundering of the
earth,

Nor as with cleaving of the sea,
Nor fierce foreshadowings of a
birth,

Nor flying dreams of death to
be,

Nor loosening of the large world's
girth,

And quickening of the body of night,
And sound of thunder in men's
ears,

And fire of lightning in men's sight,
Fate, mother of desires and fears,

Bore unto men the law of tears.
But sudden, an unfathered lame,

And broken out of night, she
shone,—

She, without body, without name,
In days forgotten and foregone;

And heaven rang round her as she
came,

Like smitten cymbals, and lay bare;
 Clouds and great stars, thunders
 and snows,
 The blue sad fields and folds of air,
 The life that breathes, the life that
 grows,
 All wind, all fire, that burns or
 blows,
 Even all these knew her: for she is
 great,
 The daughter of doom, the mother
 of death,
 The sister of sorrow; a lifelong
 weight
 That no man's finger lighteneth,
 Nor any god can lighten fate;
 A landmark seen across the way
 Where one race treads as the other
 trod;
 An evil sceptre, an evil stay,
 Wrought for a staff, wrought for a
 rod,
 The bitter jealousy of God.

For death is deep as the sea,
 And fate as the waves thereof.
 Shall the waves take pity on thee,
 Or the south-wind offer thee love?
 Wilt thou take the night for thy day,
 Or the darkness for light on thy way,
 Till thou say in thine heart
 Enough?
 Behold, thou art over fair, thou art over
 wise;
 The sweetness of spring in thine hair,
 and the light in thine eyes.
 The light of the spring in thine eyes,
 and the sound in thine ears;
 Yet thine heart shall wax heavy with
 sighs, and thine eyelids with
 tears.
 Wilt thou cover thine hair with gold,
 and with silver thy feet?
 Hast thou taken the purple to fold thee,
 and made thy mouth sweet?
 Behold, when thy face is made bare, he
 that loved thee shall hate;
 Thy face shall be no more fair at the
 fall of thy fate.
 For thy life shall fall as a leaf, and be
 shed as the rain;
 And the veil of thine head shall be
 grief; and the crown shall be pain.

Althæa. Ho, ye that wail, and ye that
 sing, make way
 Till I be come among you. Hide your
 tears,
 Ye little weepers, and your laughing
 lips,
 Ye laughers, for a little; lo mine eyes
 That outweep heaven at rainiest, and
 my mouth
 That laughs as gods laugh at us!
 Fate's are we,
 Yet fate is ours a breathing-space; yea,
 mine,
 Fate is made mine forever; he is my
 son,
 My bedfellow, my brother. You strong
 gods,
 Give place unto me; I am as any of
 you,
 To give life and to take life. Thou,
 old earth,
 That hast made man and unmade; thou
 whose mouth
 Looks red from the eaten fruits of
 thine own womb;
 Behold me with what lips upon what
 food
 I feed and fill my body; even with flesh
 Made of my body. Lo, the fire I lit
 I burn with fire to quench it; yea, with
 flame
 I burn up even the dust and ash there-
 of.
Chorus. Woman, what fire is this
 thou burnest with?
Althæa. Yea to the bone, yea to the
 blood and all.
Chorus. For this thy face and hair
 are as one fire.
Althæa. A tongue that licks and beats
 upon the dust.
Chorus. And in thine eyes are hollow
 light and heat.
Althæa. Of flame not fed with hand
 or frankincense.
Chorus. I fear thee for the trembling
 of thine eyes.
Althæa. Neither with love they trem-
 ble, nor for fear.
Chorus. And thy mouth shuddering
 like a shot bird.
Althæa. Not as the bride's mouth
 when man kisses it.

<i>Chorus.</i> Nay, but what thing is this thing thou hast done?	Yea, the smoke bites me; yea, I drink the steam
<i>Althæa.</i> Look, I am silent, speak your eyes for me.	With nostril and with eyelid and with lip
<i>Chorus.</i> I see a faint fire lightening from the hall.	Insatiate and intolerant; and mine hands
<i>Althæa.</i> Gaze, stretch your eyes, strain till the lids drop off.	Burn, and fire feeds upon mine eyes; I reel
<i>Chorus.</i> Flushed pillars down the flickering vestibule.	As one made drunk with living, whence he draws
<i>Althæa.</i> Stretch with your necks like birds: cry, chirp as they.	Drunken delight; yet I, though mad for joy,
<i>Chorus.</i> And a long brand that black- ens: and white dust.	Loathe my long living, and am waxen red
<i>Althæa.</i> O children, what is this ye see? your eyes	As with the shadow of shed blood; behold,
Are blinder than night's face at fall of moon.	I am kindled with the flames that fade in him,
That is my son, my flesh, my fruit of life,	I am swollen with subsiding of his veins,
My travail, and the year's weight of my womb,	I am flooded with his ebbing; my lit eyes
Meleager, a fire enkindled of mine hands	Flame with the falling fire that leaves his lids
And of mine hands extinguished: this is he.	Bloodless; my cheek is luminous with blood
<i>Chorus.</i> O gods, what word has flown out at thy mouth?	Because his face is ashen. Yet, O child,
<i>Althæa.</i> I did this, and I say this, and I die.	Son, first-born, fairest — O sweet mouth, sweet eyes,
<i>Chorus.</i> Death stands upon the door- way of thy lips,	That drew my life out through my suck- ling breast,
And in thy mouth has death set up his house.	That shone and clove mine heart through — O soft knees
<i>Althæa.</i> O death, a little, a little while, sweet death,	Clinging, O tender treadings of soft feet,
Until I see the brand burnt down and die.	Cheeks warm with little kissings — O child, child,
<i>Chorus.</i> She reels as any reed under the wind,	What have we made each other? Lo, I felt
And cleaves unto the ground with stag- gering feet.	Thy weight cleave to me, a burden of beauty, O son,
<i>Althæa.</i> Girls, one thing will I say and hold my peace.	Thy cradled brows and loveliest loving lips,
I that did this will weep not nor cry out, Cry ye and weep: I will not call on gods,	The floral hair, the little lightening eyes And all thy goodly glory; with mine hands
Call ye on them; I will not pity man, Show ye your pity. I know not if I live;	Delicately I fed thee, with my tongue Tenderly spake, saying, Verily in God's time,
Save that I feel the fire upon my face, And on my cheek the burning of a brand.	For all the little likeness of thy limbs, Son, I shall make thee a kingly man to fight,

A lordiy leader; and hear before I die,

"She bore the goodliest sword of all the world."

Oh! oh! For all my life turns round on me;

I am severed from myself, my name is gone,—

My name that was a healing, it is changed:

My name is a consuming. From this time,

Though mine eyes reach to the end of all these things,

My lips shall not unfasten till I die.

Semichorus. She has filled with sighing the city,

And the ways thereof with tears;

She arose, she girdled her sides,

She set her face as a bride's;

She wept, and she had no pity;

Trembled, and felt no fears.

Semichorus. Her eyes were clear as the sun,

Her brows were fresh as the day;

She girdled herself with gold,

Her robes were manifold;

But the days of her worship are done,

Her praise is taken away.

Semichorus. For she set her hand to the fire,

With her mouth she kindled the same;

As the mouth of a flute-player,

So was the mouth of her;

With the might of her strong desire

She blew the breath of the flame.

Semichorus. She set her hand to the wood,

She took the fire in her hand;

As one who is nigh to death,

She panted with strange breath

She opened her lips unto blood,

She breathed and kindled the brand.

Semichorus. As a wood-dove newly shot,

She sobbed and lifted her breast;

She sighed and covered her eyes,

Filling her lips with sighs;

She sighed, she withdrew herself not,

She refrained not, taking not rest.

Semichorus. But as the wind which is drouth,

And as the air which is death,

As storm that severeth ships,

Her breath severing her lips,

The breath came forth of her mouth,

And the fire came forth of her breath.

Second Messenger. Queen, and you maidens, there is come on us

A thing more deadly than the face of death:

Meleager the good lord is as one slain.

Semichorus. Without sword, without sword is he stricken;

Slain, and slain without hand.

Second Messenger. For as keen ice divided of the sun

His limbs divide, and as thawed snow the flesh

Thaws from off all his body to the hair.

Semichorus. He wastes as the embers quicken;

With the brand he fades as a brand.

Second Messenger. Even while they sang, and all drew hither, and he

Lifted both hands to crown the Arcadian's hair,

And fix the looser leaves, both hands

fell down.

Semichorus. With rending of check

and of hair

Lament ye, mourn for him, weep.

Second Messenger. Straightway the

crown slid off, and smote on

earth,

First fallen; and he, grasping his own

hair, groaned,

And cast his raiment round his face,

and fell.

Semichorus. Alas for visions that

were,

And soothsayings spoken in sleep!

Second Messenger. But the king

twitched his reins in, and leapt

down,

And caught him, crying out twice "O

child!" and thrice,

So that men's eyelids thickened with

their tears.

Semichorus. Lament with a long la

mentation,

Cry, for an end is at hand.

Second Messenger. "O son!" he said,
"son, lift thine eyes, draw breath,
Pity me!" But Meleager with sharp
lips

Gasped, and his face waxed like as sun-
burnt grass.

Semichorus Cry aloud, O thou king-
dom, O nation,
O stricken, a ruinous land!

Second Messenger. Whereat king
Ceneus, straightening feeble
knees,

With feeble hands heaved up a lessen-
ing weight,
And laid him sadly in strange hands,
and wept.

Semichorus. Thou art smitten, her
lord, her desire,

Thy dear blood wasted as rain.

Second Messenger. And they with
tears and rendings of the beard
Bear hither a breathing body, wept
upon
And lightening at each footfall, sick to
death.

Semichorus. Thou madest thy sword
as a fire,

With fire for a sword thou art slain.

Second Messenger. And lo, the feast
turned funeral, and the crowns
Fallen; and the huntress and the hunter
trapped;
And weeping and changed faces and
veiled hair.

Meleager. Let your hands meet
Round the weight of my head;
Lift ye my feet

As the feet of the dead;

For the flesh of my body is molten, the
limbs of it molten as lead.

Chorus. O thy luminous face,
Thine imperious eyes!

O the grief, O the grace,
As of day when it dies!

Who is this bending over thee, lord,
with tears and suppression of
sighs?

Meleager. Is a bride so fair?
Is a maid so meek?

With unchapleted hair,
With unfileted cheek,

Atalanta, the pure among women, whose
name is as blessing to speak.

Atalanta. I would that with feet
Unsandalled, unshod,
Overbold, overfleet,

I had swum not nor trod
From Arcadia to Calydon northward,
a blast of the envy of God.

Meleager. Unto each man his fate;
Unto each as he saith

In whose fingers the weight
Of the world is as breath;

Yet I would that in clamor of battle
mine hands had laid hold upon
death.

Chorus. Not with cleaving of shields
And their clash in thine ear,
When the lord of fought fields
Breaketh spear-shaft from spear,

Thou art broken, our lord, thou art
broken, with travail and labor
and fear.

Meleager. Would God he had found
me

Beneath fresh boughs!

Would God he had bound me
Unawares in mine house,

With light in mine eyes, and songs in my
lips, and a crown on my brows!

Chorus. Whence art thou sent from
us?

Whither thy goal?

How art thou rent from us,
Thou that wert whole,

As with severing of eyelids and eyes, as
with sundering of body and soul!

Meleager. My heart is within me
As an ash in the fire;

Whosoever hath seen me,
Without lute, without lyre,

Shall sing of me grievous things, even
things that were ill to desire.

Chorus. Who shall raise thee
From the house of the dead?

Or what man praise thee

That thy praise may be said?

Alas thy beauty! alas thy body! alas
thine head!

Meleager. But thou, O mother,
The dreamer of dreams,

Wilt thou bring forth another
To feel the sun's beams

When I move among shadows a
shadow, and wail by impassable
streams?

Æneus. What thing wilt thou leave
me

Now this thing is done?

A man wilt thou give me,

A son for my son,

For the light of mine eyes, the desire
of my life, the desirable one?

Chorus. Thou wert glad above others,
Yea, fair beyond word;

Thou wert glad among mothers;

For each man that heard

Of thee, praise there was added unto
thee, as wings to the feet of a bird.

Æneus. Who shall give back

Thy face of old years,

With travail made black,

Grown gray among fears,

Mother of sorrow, mother of cursing,
mother of tears?

Meleager. Though thou art as fire

Fed with fuel in vain,

My delight, my desire,

Is more chaste than the rain,

More pure than the dewfall, more holy
than stars are that live without
stain.

Atalanta. I would that as water

My life's blood had thawed,

Or as winter's wan daughter

Leaves lowland and lawn

Spring-stricken, or ever mine eyes had
beheld thee made dark in thy
dawn.

Chorus. When thou dravest the men

Of the chosen of Thrace,

None turned him again,

Nor endured he thy face

Clothed round with the blush of the
battle, with light from a terrible
place.

Æneus. Thou shouldst die as he dies

For whom none sheddeth tears;

Filling thine eyes

And fulfilling thine ears

With the brilliance of battle, the bloom
and the beauty, the splendor of
spears.

Chorus. In the ears of the world

It is sung, it is told,

And the light thereof hurled

And the noise thereof rolled

From the Acroceraunian snow to the
ford of the fleece of gold.

Meleager. Would God ye could carry
me

Forth of all these;

Heap sand and bury me

By the Chersonese

Where the thundering Bosphorus an-
swers the thunder of Pontic seas.

Æneus. Dost thou mock at our
praise

And the singing begun

And the men of strange days

Praising my son

In the folds of the hills of home, high
places of Calydon?

Meleager. For the dead man no home
is;

Ah, better to be

What the flower of the foam is

In fields of the sea,

That the sea-waves might be as my rai-
ment, the gulf-stream a garment
for me.

Chorus. Who shall seek thee and
bring

And restore thee thy day,

When the dove dipt her wing,

And the oars won their way

Where the narrowing Symplegades
whitened the straits of Propontis
with spray?

Meleager. Will ye crown me my
tomb

Or exalt me my name,

Now my spirits consume,

Now my flesh is a flame?

Let the sea slake it once, and men
speak of me sleeping to praise
me or shame.

Chorus. Turn back now, turn thee,

As who turns him to wake;

Though the life in thee burn thee,

Couldst thou bathe it and slake

Where the sea-ridge of Helle hangs
heavier, and east upon west
waters break?

Meleager. Would the winds blow me
back

Or the waves hurl me home?

Ah, to touch in the track

Where the pine learnt to roam

Cold girdles and crowns of the sea-
gods, cool blossoms of water
and foam!

Chorus. The gods may release
That they made fast;
Thy soul shall have ease
In thy limbs at the last;
But what shall they give thee for life,
sweet life that is overpast?

Meleager. Not the life of men's veins,
Not of flesh that conceives;
But the grace that remains,
The fair beauty that cleaves
To the life of the rains in the grasses,
the life of the dew on the
leaves.

Chorus. Thou wert helmsman and
chief;

Wilt thou turn in an hour,
Thy limbs to the leaf,
Thy face to the flower,
Thy blood to the water, thy soul to the
gods who divide and devour?

Meleager. The years are hungry,
They wait all their days;
The gods wax angry
And weary of praise;

And who shall bridle their lips? and
who shall straiten their ways?

Chorus. The gods guard over us
With sword and with rod;
Weaving shadow to cover us,
Heaping the sod,

That law may fulfil herself wholly, to
darken man's face before God.

Meleager. O holy head of CENÆUS, lo
thy son

Guiltless, yet red from alien guilt, yet
foul

With kinship of contaminated lives,
Lo, for their blood I die; and mine
own blood

For blood-shedding of mine is mixed
therewith,

That death may no discern me from
my kin.

Yet with clean heart die and faultless
hand,

Not shamefully; thou herefore of thy
love

Salute me, and bid me among the
dead

Well, as the dead far; for the best
man dead

Fares sadly; nathless I now faring
well

Pass without fear where nothing is to
fear,
Having thy love about me and thy
goodwill,

O father, among dark places and men
dead.

CENÆUS. Child, I salute thee with sad
heart and tears,
And bid thee comfort, being a perfect
man

In fight, and honorable in the house
of peace.

The gods give thee fair wage and dues
of death,
And me brief days and ways to come
at thee.

Meleager. Pray thou thy days be long
before thy death,
And full of ease and kingdom; seeing
in death

There is no comfort and none after-
growth,
Nor shall one thence look up and see
day's dawn

Nor light upon the land whither I go.
Live thou, and take thy fill of days, and
die

When thy day comes; and make not
much of death,

Lest ere thy day thou reap an evil
thing.

Thou too, the bitter mother and mother-
plague

Of this my weary body—thou too,
queen,

The source and end, the sower and the
scythe,

The rain that ripens and the drought
that slays,

The sand that swallows and the spring
that feeds,

To make me and unmake me,—thou, I
say,

Althæa, since my father's ploughshare,
drawn

Through fatal seedland of a female
field,

Furrowed thy body, whence a wheaten
ear

Strong from the sun and fragrant from
the rains

I sprang, and cleft the closure of thy
womb,

Mother, I dying with unforgetful tongue
 Hail thee as holy, and worship thee as
 just,
 Who art unjust and unholy; and with
 my knees
 Would worship, but thy fire and subtlety,
 Dissundering them, devour me; for
 these limbs
 Are as light dust and crumbings from
 mine urn
 Before the fire has touched them; and
 my face
 As a dead leaf or dead foot's mark on
 snow,
 And all this body a broken barren tree
 That was so strong, and all this flower
 of life
 Disbranched and desecrated miserably,
 And minished all that godlike muscle
 and might,
 And lesser than a man's: for all my
 veins
 Fail me, and all mine ashen life burns
 down.
 I would thou hadst let me live; but
 gods averse,
 But fortune, and the fiery feet of change,
 And time, these would not, these tread
 out my life,—
 These and not thou; me too thou hast
 loved, and I
 Thee; but this death was mixed with
 all my life,
 Mine end with my beginning: and this
 law,
 This only, slays me, and not my mother
 at all.
 And let no brother or sister grieve too
 sore,
 Nor melt their hearts out on me with
 their tears,
 Since extreme love and sorrowing over-
 much
 Vex the great gods, and over-loving men
 Slay and are slain for love's sake; and
 this house
 Shall bear much better children; why
 should these
 Weep? but in patience let them live
 their lives
 And mine pass by forgotten: thou alone,

Mother, thou sole and only, thou now
 these,
 Keep me in mind a little when I die
 Because I was thy first-born; let thy
 soul
 Pity me, pity even me gone hence and
 dead.
 Though thou wert wroth, and though
 thou bear again
 Much happier sons, and all men later
 born
 Exceedingly excel me, yet do thou
 Forget not, nor think shame; I was thy
 son.
 Time was, I did not shame thee; and
 time was,
 I thought to live, and make thee honor-
 able
 With deeds as great as these men's: but
 they live,
 These, and I die; and what thing should
 have been,
 Surely I know not; yet I charge thee,
 seeing
 I am dead already, love me not the less.
 Me, O my mother! I charge thee by
 these gods,
 My father's, and that holier breast of
 thine,
 By these that see me dying, and that
 which nursed,
 Love me not less, thy first-born: though
 grief come,
 Grief only, of me, and of all these great
 joy,
 And shall I live always to thee; for
 thou know'st,
 O mother, O breasts that bare me, for
 ye know,
 O sweet head of my mother, sacred eyes,
 Ye know my soul: albeit I sinned, ye
 know
 Albeit I kneel not, neither touch thy
 knees,
 But with my lips kneel, and with my
 heart
 I fall about thy feet and worship thee.
 And ye farewell now, all my friends,
 and ye,
 Kinsmen, much younger and glorious
 more than
 Sons of my mother's sister; and al-
 farewell

That were in Colchis with me, and bare
down
The waves and wars that met us: and
though times
Change, and though now I be not any
thing,
Forget not me among you, what I did
In my good time; for even by all those
days,
Those days and this, and your own liv-
ing souls,
And by the light and luck of you that
live,
And by this miserable spoil, and me
Dying, I beseech you, let my name not
die.
But thou, dear, touch me with thy rose-
like hands,
And fasten up mine eyelids with thy
mouth,
A bitter kiss; and grasp me with thine
arms,
Printing with heavy lips my light waste
flesh,
Made light and thin by heavy-handed
fate,
And with thine holy maiden eyes drop
dew,
Drop tears for dew upon me who am
dead,
Me who have loved thee; seeing with-
out sin done
I am gone down to the empty weary
house
Where no flesh is, nor beauty, nor swift
eyes,

Nor sound of mouth, nor might of hands
and feet.
But thou, dear, hide my body with thy
veil,
And with thy raiment cover foot and
head,
And stretch thyself upon me, and touch
hands
With hands and lips with lips: be pitiful
As thou art maiden perfect; let no man
Defile me to despise me, saying, This
man
Died woman-wise, a woman's offering,
slain
Through female fingers in his woof of
life,
Dishonorable; for thou hast honored
me.
And now for God's sake kiss me once
and twice,
And let me go; for the night gathers me,
And in the night shall no man gather
fruit.
Atalanta. Hail thou! but I with
heavy face and feet
Turn homeward, and am gone out of
thine eyes.
Chorus. Who shall contend with his
lords,
Or cross them, or do them wrong?
Who shall bind them as with cords?
Who shall tame them as with song?
Who shall smite them as with
swords?
For the hands of their kingdom are
strong.

ERECHTHEUS: A TRAGEDY.

DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER.

PERSONS.

ERECHTHEUS.
CHORUS OF ATHENIAN
ELDERS.

PRAXITHEA.
CHTHONIA.
HERALD OF EUMOLPUS.

MESSENGER.
ATHENIAN HERALD.
ATHENA.

Erechtheus. Mother of life and death
and all men's days,
Earth, whom I chief of all men born
would bless,
And call thee with more loving lips
than theirs
Mother, for of this very body of thine
And living blood I have my breath and
live,
Behold me, even thy son, me crowned
of men,
Me made thy child by that strong, cunning god
Who fashions fire and iron, who begat
Me for a sword and beacon-fire on thee,
Me fosterling of Pallas, in her shade
Reared, that I first might pay the nursing debt,
Hallowing her fame with flower of
third-year feasts,
And first bow down the bridled strength
of steeds
To lose the wild wont of their birth,
and bear
Clasp of man's knees and steerage of
his hand,
Or fourfold service of his fire-swift
wheels
That whirl the four-yoked chariot; me
the king

Who stand before thee naked now, and
cry,
O holy and general mother of all men
born,
But mother most and motherliest of
mine,
Earth, for I ask thee rather of all the
gods,
What have we done? what word mis-
timed or work
Hath winged the wild feet of this time-
less curse
To fall as fire upon us? Lo, I stand
Here on this brow's crown of the city's
head
That crowns its lovely body, till death's
hour
Waste it; but now the dew of dawn
and birth
Is fresh upon it from thy womb, and
we
Behold it born how beauteous: one day
more
I see the world's wheel of the circling
sun
Roll up rejoicing to regard on earth
This one thing goodliest, fair as heaven
or he,
Worth a god's gaze or strife of gods:
but now

Would this day's ebb of their spent
 wave of strife
 Sweep it to sea, wash it on wreck, and
 leave
 A costless thing contemned; and in our
 stead,
 Where these walls were, and sounding
 streets of men,
 Make wide a waste for tongueless
 water-herds
 And spoil of ravening fishes; that no
 more
 Should men say, Here was Athens.
 This shalt thou
 Sustain not, nor thy son endure to see,
 Nor thou to live and look on; for the
 womb
 Bare me not base that bare me miser-
 able,
 To hear this loud brood of the Thra-
 cian foam
 Break its broad strength of billowy-
 beating war
 Here, and upon it as a blast of death
 Blowing, the keen wrath of a fire-souled
 king,
 A strange growth grafted on our natu-
 ral soil,
 A root of Thrace in Eleusinian earth
 Set for no comfort to the kindly land,
 Son of the sea's lord and our first-born
 foe,
 Eumolpus; nothing sweet in ears of
 thine
 The music of his making, nor a song
 Toward hopes of ours auspicious; for
 the note
 Rings as for death oracular to thy
 sons
 That goes before him on the sea-wind
 blown
 Full of this charge laid on me, to put
 out
 The brief light kindled of mine own
 child's life,
 Or with this helmsman hand that steers
 the state
 Run right on the under shoal and ridge
 of death
 The populous ship with all its freight-
 age gone,
 And sails that were to take the wind of
 time

Rent, and the tackling that should hold
 out fast
 In confluent surge of loud calamities
 Broken, with spars of rudders and lost
 oars
 That were to row toward harbor, and
 find rest
 In some most glorious haven of all the
 world,
 And else may never near it: such a
 song
 The gods have set his lips on fire
 withal
 Who threatens now in all their names
 to bring
 Ruin; but none of these, thou knowest,
 have I
 Chid with my tongue, or cursed at heart
 for grief,
 Knowing how the soul runs reinless
 on sheer death
 Whose grief or joy takes part against
 the gods.
 And what they will is more than our
 desire,
 And their desire is more than what we
 will.
 For no man's will and no desire of
 man's
 Shall stand as doth a god's will. Yet,
 O fair
 Mother, that seest me how I cast no
 word
 Against them, plead no reason, crave
 no cause,
 Boast me not blameless, nor bewEEP
 me wronged,
 By this fair wreath of towers we have
 decked thee with,
 This chaplet that we give thee woven
 of walls,
 This girdle of gate and temple and cita-
 del
 Drawn round beneath thy bosom, and
 fast linked
 As to thine heart's root,—this dear
 crown of thine,
 This present light, this city,—be not
 thou
 Slow to take heed nor slack to strength-
 en her,
 Fare we so short-lived howsoe'er, and
 pay

What price we may to ransom thee thy
town,
Not me my life; but thou that diest
not, thou,
Though all our house die for this peo-
ple's sake,
Keep thou for ours thy crown our city,
guard
And give it life the lovelier that we
died.

Chorus. Sun, that hast lightened and
loosed by thy might
Ocean and Earth from the lordship of
night,
Quickening with vision his eye that was
veiled,
Freshening the force in her heart that
had failed,
That sister fettered and blinded brother
Should have sight by thy grace and de-
light of each other,
Behold now and see

What profit is given them of thee;
What wrath has enkindled with mad-
ness of mind
Her limbs that were bounden, his face
that was blind,
To be locked as in wrestle together,
and lighten
With fire that shall darken thy fire in
the sky,
Body to body and eye against eye
In a war against kind,
Till the bloom of her fields and her
high hills whiten

With the foam of his waves more
high.
For the sea-marks set to divide of
old
The kingdoms to Ocean and Earth as-
signed,
The hoar sea-fields from the cornfields'
gold,
His wine-bright waves from her vine-
yards' fold,
Frail forces we find
To bridle the spirit of gods or bind
Till the heat of their hearts wax
cold.
But the peace that was stablished be-
tween them to stand
Is rent now in twain by the strength of
his hand

Who stirs up the storm of his sons over-
bold
To pluck from fight what he lost of
right,
By council and judgment of gods that
spake
And gave great Pallas the strife's fair
stake,
The lordship and love of the lovely
land,
The grace of the town that hath on it
for crown
But a headband to wear
Of violets one-hued with her hair:
For the vales and the green high places
of earth

Hold nothing so fair,
And the depths of the sea bear no such
birth
Of the manifold births they bear.
Too well, too well was the great stake
worth

A strife divine for the gods to judge,
A crowned god's triumph, a foiled
god's grudge,
Though the loser be strong and the
victress wise

Who played long since for so large a
prize,
The fruitful immortal anointed adored
Dear city of men without master or
lord,
Fair fortress and fostress of sons born
free,
Who stand in her sight and in thine, O
sun,

Slaves of no man, subjects of none;
A wonder enthroned on the hills and
sea,
A maiden crowned with a fourfold
glory

That none from the pride of her head
may rend,
Violet and olive-leaf purple and
hoary,
Song-wreath and story the fairest of
fame,

Flowers that the winter can blast not
or bend;
A light upon earth as the sun's own
flame,
A name as his name,
Athens, a praise without end.

A noise is arisen against us of waters,
 A sound as of battle come up from the sea.
 Strange hunters are hard on us, hearts without pity;
 They have staked their nets round the fair young city,
 That the sons of her strength and her virgin daughters
 Should find not whither alive to flee.
 And we know not yet of the word unwritten,
 The doom of the Pythian we have not heard;
 From the navel of earth and the veiled mid altar
 We wait for a token with hopes that falter,
 With fears that hang on our hearts thought-smitten
 Lest her tongue be kindled with no good word.
 O thou not born of the womb, nor bred
 In the bride-night's warmth of a changed god's bed,
 But thy life as a lightning was flashed from the light of thy father's head,
 O chief god's child by a motherless birth,
 If aught in his sight we indeed be worth,
 Keep death from us thou, that art none of the gods of the dead under earth.
 Thou that hast power on us, save, if thou wilt;
 Let the blind wave breach not thy wall scarce built;
 But bless us not so as by bloodshed, impute not for grace to us guilt,
 Nor by price of pollution of blood set us free;
 Let the hands be taintless that clasp thy knee,
 Nor a maiden be slain to redeem for a maiden her shrine from the sea.
 O earth, O sun, turn back
 Full on his deadly track

Death, that would smite you black and mar your creatures,
 And with one hand disroot
 All tender flower and fruit,
 With one strike blind and mute the heaven's fair features,
 Pluck out the eyes of morn, and make
 Silence in the east and blackness whence the bright songs break.
 Help, earth, help, heaven, that hear
 The song-notes of our fear,
 Shrewd notes and shrill, not clear or joyful-sounding;
 Hear, highest of gods, and stay
 Death on his hunter's way,
 Full on his forceless prey his beagles hounding;
 Break thou his bow, make short his hand,
 Maim his fleet foot whose passage kills the living land.
 Let a third wave smite not us, father,
 Long since sore smitten of twain,
 Lest the house of thy son's son perish,
 And his name be barren on earth.
 Whose race wilt thou comfort rather
 If none to thy son remain?
 Whose seed wilt thou choose to cherish
 If his be cut off in the birth?
 For the first fair graft of his grafting
 Was rent from its maiden root
 By the strong swift hand of a lover
 Who fills the night with his breath;
 On the lip of the stream low-laughing
 Her green soft virginal shoot
 Was plucked from the stream-side cover
 By the grasp of a love like death.
 For a god's was the mouth that kissed her
 Who speaks, and the leaves lie dead,
 When winter awakes as at warning
 To the sound of his foot from Thrace.
 Nor happier the bed of her sister,
 Though Love's self laid her abed
 By a bridegroom beloved of the morning
 And fair as the dawn's own face.

For Procris, ensnared and ensnaring
 By the fraud of a twofold wile,
 With the point of her own spear
 stricken,
 By the gift of her own hand fell.
 Oversubtle in doubts, overdaring
 In deeds and devices of guile,
 And strong to quench as to quicken,
 O Love, have we named thee
 well?
 By thee was the spear's edge whetted
 That laid her dead in the dew,
 In the moist green glens of the
 midland,
 By her dear lord slain and thee.
 And him at the cliff's end fretted
 By the gray keen waves, him too,
 Thine hand from the white-browed
 headland
 Flung down for a spoil to the
 sea.
 But enough now of griefs gray-growing
 Have darkened the house divine,
 Have flowered on its boughs, and
 faded,
 And green is the brave stock
 yet.
 O father all-seeing and all-knowing,
 Let the last fruit fall not of thine
 From the tree with whose boughs
 we are shaded,
 From the stock that thy son's
 hand set.
Erechtheus. O daughter of Cephisus,
 from all time
 Wise have I found thee, wife and queen,
 of heart
 Perfect; nor in the days that knew not
 wind
 Nor days when storm blew death upon
 our peace
 Was thine heart swoln with seed of
 pride, or bowed
 With blasts of bitter fear that break
 men's souls
 Who lift too high their minds toward
 heaven, in thought
 Too godlike grown for worship; but of
 mood
 Equal, in good time reverent of time
 bad,
 And glad in ill days of the good that
 were.

Nor now too would I fear thee, now
 misdoubt
 Lest fate should find thee lesser than thy
 doom,
 Chosen if thou be to bear and to be
 great
 Haply beyond all women; and the
 word
 Speaks thee divine, dear queen, that
 speaks thee dead,
 Dead being alive, or quick and dead in
 one
 Shall not men call thee living? yet I
 fear
 To slay thee timeless with my proper
 tongue,
 With lips, thou knowest, that love thee;
 and such work
 Was never laid of gods on men, such
 word
 No mouth of man learnt ever, as from
 mine,
 Most loath to speak, thine ear most
 loath shall take,
 And hold it hateful as the grave to hear.
Praxithea. That word there is not in
 all speech of man,
 King, that being spoken of the gods
 and thee
 I have not heart to honor, or dare
 hold
 More than I hold thee or the gods in
 hate
 Hearing; but if my heart abhor it
 heard
 Being insubmissive, hold me not thy
 wife,
 But use me like a stranger, whom thine
 hand
 Hath fed by chance, and finding thence
 no thanks
 Flung off for shame's sake to forget-
 fulness.
Erechtheus. O, of what breath shall
 such a word be made,
 Or from what heart find utterance?
 Would my tongue
 Were rent forth rather from the quiver-
 ing root
 Than made as fire or poison thus for
 thee.
Praxithea. But if thou speak of blood,
 and I that hear

Be chosen of all for this land's love to die,

And save to thee thy city, know this well,

Happiest I hold me of her seed alive.

Erechtheus. O sun that seest, what saying was this of thine,

God, that thy power has breathed into my lips?

For from no sunlit shrine darkling it came.

Praxithea. What portent from the mid oracular place

Hath smitten thee so like a curse that flies

Wingless, to waste men with its plagues? Yet speak.

Erechtheus. Thy blood the gods require not; take this first.

Praxithea. To me than thee more grievous this should sound.

Erechtheus. That word rang truer and bitterer than it knew.

Praxithea. This is not then thy grief, to see me die?

Erechtheus. Die shalt thou not, yet give thy blood to death.

Praxithea. If this ring worse, I know not: strange it rang.

Erechtheus. Alas! thou knowest not; woe is me that know!

Praxithea. And woe shall mine be, knowing; yet halt not here.

Erechtheus. Guiltless of blood this state may stand no more.

Praxithea. Firm let it stand, whatever bleed or fall.

Erechtheus. O gods, that I should say it shall, and weep!

Praxithea. Weep, and say this? no tears should bathe such words.

Erechtheus. Woe's me that I must weep upon them! woe!

Praxithea. What stain is on them for thy tears to cleanse?

Erechtheus. A stain of blood unpurgeable with tears.

Praxithea. Whence? for thou sayest it is and is not mine.

Erechtheus. Hear then, and know why only of all men I

That bring such news as mine is, I alone

Must wash good words with weeping I and thou,

Woman, must wail to hear men sing, must groan

To see their joy who love us; all our friends

Save only we, and all save we that love This holiness of Athens, in our sight

Shall lift their hearts up, in our hearing praise

Gods whom we may not; for to these they give

Life of their children, flower of all their seed,

For all their travail fruit, for all their hopes

Harvest; but we for all our good things, we

Have at their hands which fill all these folk full

Death, barrenness, child-slaughter, curses, cares,

Sea-leaguer and land-shipwreck; which of these,

Which wilt thou first give thanks for? all are thine.

Praxithea. What first they give who give this city good,

For that first given to save it I give thanks

First, and thanks heartier from a happier tongue,

More than for any my peculiar grace Shown me and not my country; next

for this, That none of all these, but for all these I,

Must bear my burden, and no eye but mine

Weep of all women's in this broad land born

Who see their land's deliverance; but much more,

But most for this I thank them most of all,

That this their edge of doom is chosen to pierce

My heart, and not my country's; for the sword

Drawn to smite there, and sharpened for such stroke

Should wound more deep than any turned on me.

Chorus. Well fares the land that
bears such fruit, and well
The spirit that breeds such thought
and speech in man.

Erechtheus. O woman, thou hast
shamed my heart with thine,
To show so strong a patience: take
then all;
For all shall break not nor bring down
thy soul.

The word that journeying to the bright
god's shrine

Who speaks askance and darkling, but
his name

Hath in it slaying and ruin broad writ
out,

I heard, hear thou: thus saith he:
There shall die

One soul for all this people; from thy
womb

Came forth the seed that here on dry
bare ground

Death's hand must sow untimely, to
bring forth

Nor blade nor shoot in season, being
by name

To the under gods made holy, who re-
quire

For this land's life her death and
maiden blood

To save a maiden city. Thus I heard,
And thus with all said leave thee; for

save this
No word is left us, and no hope alive.

Chorus. He hath uttered too surely
his wrath not obscurely, nor
wrapt as in mists of his breath,
The master that lightens not hearts he
enlightens, but gives them fore-
knowledge of death.

As a bolt from the cloud hath he
sent it aloud, and proclaimed it
afar,

From the darkness and height of the
horror of night hath he shown
us a star.

Star may I name it, and err not, or
flame shall I say,

Born of the womb that was born
for the tomb of the day?

O Night, whom other but thee for moth-
er, and Death for the father,
Night,

Shall we dream to discover, save thee
and thy lover, to bring such a
sorrow to sight?

From the slumberless bed for thy
bedfellow spread, and his bride
under earth,

Hast thou brought forth a wild and
insatiable child, an unbearable
birth.

Pierce are the fangs of his wrath
and the pangs that they give;

None is there, none that may bear
them, not one that would live.

Chthonia. Forth of the fine-spun folds
of veils that hide

My virgin chamber toward the full-faced
sun

I set my foot, not moved of mine own
will,

Unmaidenlike, nor with unprompted
speed

Turn eyes too broad or dog-like un-
abashed

On reverend heads of men and thence
on thine,

Mother, now covered from the light
and bowed

As hers who mourns her brethren; but
what grief

Bends thy blind head thus earthward,
holds thus mute,

I know not till thy will be to lift up
Toward mine thy sorrow-muffled eyes,

and speak;
And till thy will be, would I know this
not.

Praxithea. Old men and childless, or
if sons ye have seen

And daughters, elder-born were these
than mine,

Look on this child, how young of years,
how sweet,

How scant of time and green of age
her life

Puts forth its flower of girlhood; and
her gait

How virginal, how soft her speech, her
eyes

How seemly smiling. Wise should all
ye be,

All honorable and kindly men of age:
Now give me counsel and one word to
say

That I may bear to speak, and hold my peace
Henceforth for all time even as all ye now.
Dumb are ye all, bowed eyes and tongueless mouths,
Unprofitable: if this were wind that speaks,
As much its breath might move you.
Thou then, child,
Set thy sweet eyes on mine; look through them well;
Take note of all the writing of my face
As of a tablet or a tomb inscribed
That bears me record; lifeless now, my life
Thereon that was, think written; brief to read,
Yet shall the scripture sear thine eyes as fire,
And leave them dark as dead men's.
Nay, dear child,
Thou hast no skill, my maiden, and no sense
To take such knowledge; sweet is all thy lore,
And all this bitter: yet I charge thee, learn
And love and lay this up within thine heart,
Even this my word: less ill it were to die,
Than live and look upon thy mother dead,
Thy mother-land that bare thee; no man slain
But him who hath seen it shall men count unblest,
None blest as him who hath died and seen it not.
Chthonia. That sight some god keep from me though I die!
Praxithea. A god from thee shall keep it: fear not this.
Chthonia. Thanks all my life long shall he gain of mine.
Praxithea. Short gain of all yet shall he get of thee.
Chthonia. Brief be my life, yet so long live my thanks.
Praxithea. So long? so little; how long shall they live?

Chthonia. Even while I see the sun-light and thine eyes.
Praxithea. Would mine might shut ere thine upon the sun!
Chthonia. For me thou prayest unkindly; change that prayer.
Praxithea. Not well for me thou sayest, and ill for thee.
Chthonia. Nay, for me well, if thou shalt live, not I.
Praxithea. How live, and lose these loving looks of thine?
Chthonia. It seems I too, thus praying, then, love thee not.
Praxithea. Lov'st thou not life? what wouldst thou do to die?
Chthonia. Well, but not more than all things, love I life.
Praxithea. And fain wouldst keep it as thine age allows?
Chthonia. Fain would I live, and fain not fear to die.
Praxithea. That I might bid thee die not! Peace; no more.
Chorus. A godlike race of grief the gods have set
For these to run matched equal, heart with heart.
Praxithea. Child of the chief of gods, and maiden crowned,
Queen of these towers and fostress of their king,
Pallas, and thou my father's holiest head,
A living well of life nor stanch'd nor stained,
O God Cephissus, thee too charge I next,
Be to me judge and witness; nor thine ear
Shall now my tongue invoke not, thou to me
Most hateful of things holy, mournfullest
Of all old sacred streams that wash the world,
Ilissus, on whose marge at flowery play
A whirlwind-footed bridegroom found my child,
And rapt her northward where mine elder-born
Keeps now the Thracian bride-bed of a god

Intolerable to seamen, but this land
 Finds him in hope for her sake favor-
 able,
 A gracious son by wedlock: hear me
 then
 Thou likewise, if with no faint heart or
 false
 The word I say be said, the gift be
 given,
 Which, might I choose, I had rather
 die than give
 Or speak and die not. Ere thy limbs
 were made,
 Or thine eyes lightened, strife, thou
 knowest, my child,
 'Twixt god and god had risen, which
 heavenlier name
 Should here stand hallowed, whose
 more liberal grace
 Should win this city's worship, and our
 land
 To which of these do reverence; first
 the lord
 Whose wheels make lightnings of the
 foam-flowered sea
 Here on this rock, whose height brow-
 bound with dawn
 Is head and heart of Athens, one sheer
 blow
 Struck, and beneath the triple wound
 that shook
 The stony sinews and stark roots of the
 earth
 Sprang toward the sun a sharp salt
 fount, and sank
 Where lying it lights the heart up of
 the hill,
 A well of bright strange brine; but she
 that reared
 Thy father with her same chaste foster-
 ing hand
 Set for a sign against it in our guard
 The holy bloom of the olive, whose
 hoar leaf
 High in the shadowy shrine of Pandro-
 sus
 Hath honor of us all; and of this strife
 The twelve most high gods judging
 with one mouth
 Acclaimed her victress: wroth whereat,
 as wringed
 That she should hold from him such
 prize and place,

The strong king of the tempest-rifted sea
 Loosed reinless on the low Thriasian
 plain
 The thunders of his chariots, swallow-
 ing stunned
 Earth, beasts, and men, the whole blind
 foundering world
 That was the sun's at morning, and ere
 noon
 Death's; nor this only prey fulfilled his
 mind;
 For with strange crook-toothed prows
 of Carian folk
 Who snatch a sanguine life out of the
 sea,
 Thieves keen to pluck their bloody
 fruit of spoil
 From the gray fruitless waters, has
 their god
 Furrowed our shores to waste them, as
 the fields
 Were landward harried from the north
 with swords
 Aonian, sickles of man-slaughtering
 edge
 Ground for no hopeful harvest of live
 grain
 Against us in Bæotia: these being
 spent,
 Now this third time his wind of wrath
 has blown
 Right on this people a mightier wave
 of war,
 Three times more huge a ruin; such its
 ridge
 Foam-riomed and hollow like the
 womb of heaven,
 But black for shining, and with death
 for life
 Big now to birth and ripe with child,
 full-blown
 With fear and fruit of havoc, takes the
 sun
 Out of our eyes, darkening the day,
 and blinds
 The fair sky's face unseasonably with
 change,
 A cloud in one and billow of battle, a
 surge
 High reared as heaven with monstrous
 surf of spears
 That shake on us their shadow, till
 men's heads

<p> Bend, and their hearts even with its forward wind Wither, so blasts all seed in them of hope Its breath and blight of presage; yea, even now The winter of this wind out of the deeps Makes cold our trust in comfort of the gods, And blinds our eye toward outlook; yet not here, Here never shall the Thracian plant on high For ours his father's symbol, nor with wreaths A strange folk wreathe it, upright set and crowned Here where our natural people born behold The golden Gorgon of the shield's de- fence That screens their flowering olive, nor strange gods Be graced, and Pallas here have praise no more. And if this be not I must give my child, Thee, mine own very blood and spirit of mine, Thee to be slain. Turn from me, turn thine eyes A little from me: I can bear not yet To see if still they smile on mine or no, If fear make faint the light in them, or faith Fix them as stars of safety. Need have we, Sore need of stars that set not in mid storm, Lights that outlast the lightnings; yet my heart Endures not to make proof of thine or these, Not yet to know thee whom I made, and bare What manner of woman: had I borne thee man, I had made no question of thine eyes or heart, Nor spared to read the scriptures in them writ, Wert thou my son; yet couldst thou then but die, </p>	<p> Fallen in sheer fight by chance and charge of spears, And have no more of memory, fill no tomb More famous than thy fellows in fair field, Where many share the grave, many the praise; But one crown shall one only girl my child Wear, dead for this dear city, and give back life To him that gave her and to me that bare, And save two sisters living; and all this, Is this not all good? I shall give thee, child, Thee but by fleshly nature mine, to bleed For dear land's love; but if the city fall What part is left me in my children then? But if it stand, and thou for it lie dead, Then hast thou in it a better part than we, A holier portion than we all; for each Hath but the length of his own life to live, And this most glorious mother-land on earth To worship till that life have end: but thine Hath end no more than hers; thou, dead, shalt live Till Athens live not; for the days and nights Given of thy bare brief dark dividual life, Shall she give thee half all her age long own And all its glory; for thou givest her these; But with one hand she takes, and gives again More than I gave, or she requires of thee. Come therefore, I will make thee fit for death; I that could give thee, dear, no gift at birth Save of light life that breathes and bleeds, even I </p>
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Will help thee to this better gift than mine,

And lead thee by this little living hand,
That death shall make so strong, to
that great end

Whence it shall lighten like a god's,
and strike

Dead the strong heart of battle that
would break

Athens; but ye, pray for this land, old
men,

That it may bring forth never child on
earth

To love it less, for none may more,
than we.

Chorus. Out of the north wind grief
came forth,

And the shining of a sword out of
the sea.

Yea, of old the first-blown blast blew
the prelude of this last,

The blast of his trumpet upon Rhodope.

Out of the north skies full of his cloud,
With the clamor of his storms as of a
crowd

At the wheels of a great king crying
aloud,

At the axle of a strong king's car
That has girded on the girdle of war, —

With hands that lightened the skies in
sunder,

And feet whose fall was followed of
thunder,

A god, a great god strange of name,

With horse-yoke fleeter-hoofed than
flame,

To the mountain bed of a maiden came,
Oreithyia, the bride mismated,

Wofully wed in a snow-strewn bed
With a bridegroom that kisses the

bride's mouth dead;

Without garland, without glory, without
song,

As a fawn by night on the hills belated,
Given over for a spoil unto the strong.

From lips how pale so keen a wail

At the grasp of a god's hand on her
she gave,

When his breath that darkens air made
a havoc of her hair,

It rang from the mountain even to
the wave, —

Rang with a cry, *Woe's me, woe is me!*
From the darkness upon Hæmus to the
sea;

And with hands that clung to her new
lord's knee,

As a virgin overborne with shame,
She besought him by her spouseless

fame,

By the blameless breasts of a maid un-
married

And locks unmaidenly rent and harried,
And all her flower of body, born

To match the maidenhood of morn,

With the might of the wind's wrath
wrenched and torn.

Vain, all vain as a dead man's vision

Falling by night in his old friend's
sight,

To be scattered with slumber and
slain ere light;

Such a breath of such a bridegroom
in that hour

Of her prayers made mock, of her
fears derision,

And a ravage of her youth as of a
flower.

With a leap of his limbs as a lion's, a
cry from his lips as of thunder,

In a storm of amorous godhead filled
with fire,

From the height of the heaven that was
rent with the roar of his coming
in sunder,

Sprang the strong god on the spoil
of his desire.

And the pines of the hills were as
green reeds shattered,

And their branches as buds of the
soft spring scattered,

And the west wind and east, and the
sound of the south,

Fell dumb at the blast of the north
wind's mouth,

At the cry of his coming out of
heaven.

And the wild beasts quailed in the
rifts and hollows

Where hound nor clarion of hunts-
man follows,

And the depths of the sea were
aghast, and whitened,

And the crowns of their waves were
as flame that lightened,

And the heart of the floods thereof
 was riven.
 But she knew not him coming for terror,
 she felt not her wrong that he
 wrought her,
 When her locks as leaves were shed
 before his breath,
 And she heard not for terror his prayer,
 though the cry was a god's that
 besought her,
 Blown from lips that strew the world-
 wide seas with death.
 For the heart was molten within her
 to hear,
 And her knees beneath her were
 loosened for fear,
 And her blood fast bound as a frost-
 bound water,
 And the soft new bloom of the green
 earth's daughter
 Wind-wasted as blossom of a tree ;
 As the wild god rapt her from earth's
 breast lifted,
 On the strength of the stream of his
 dark breath drifted,
 From the bosom of earth as a bride
 from the mother,
 With storm for bridesman and wreck
 for brother,
 As a cloud that he sheds upon the
 sea.

Of this hoary-headed woe
 Song made memory long ago ;
 Now a younger grief to mourn
 Needs a new song younger born.
 Who shall teach our tongues to
 reach
 What strange height of saddest
 speech,
 For the new bride's sake that is given
 to be
 A stay to fetter the foot of the sea,
 Lest it quite spurn down and trample
 the town,
 Ere the violets be dead that were
 plucked for its crown,
 Or its olive-leaf whiten and with-
 er ?
 Who shall say of the wind's way
 That he journeyed yesterday,
 Or the track of the storm that shall
 sound to-morrow,

If the new be more than the gray-
 grown sorrow ?
 For the wind of the green first season
 was keen,
 And the blast shall be sharper than
 blew between
 That the breath of the sea blows
 hither.
Herald of Eumolpus. Old men, gray
 borderers on the march of death,
 Tongue-fighters, tough of talk and sin-
 ewy speech,
 Else nerveless, from no crew of such
 faint folk
 Whose tongues are stouter than their
 hands come I
 To bid not you to battle : let them strike
 Whose swords are sharper than your
 keen-tongued wail,
 And ye, sit fast and sorrow ; but what
 man
 Of all this land-folk and earth-labor-
 ing herd
 For heart or hand seems foremost, him
 I call,
 If heart be his to hearken, him bid forth
 To try if one be in the sun's sight born
 Of all that grope and grovel on dry
 ground
 That may join hands in battle-grip for
 death
 With them whose seed and strength is
 of the sea.
Chorus. Know thou this much for all
 thy loud blast blown,
 We lack not hands to speak with,
 swords to plead,
 For proof of peril, not of boisterous
 breath,
 Sea-wind and storm of barren mouths
 that foam
 And rough rock's edge of menace ; and
 short space
 May lessen thy large ignorance, and
 inform
 This insolence with knowledge if there
 live
 Men earth-begotten of no tenderer
 thews
 Than knit the great joints of the grim
 sea's brood
 With hasps of steel together ; heaven
 to help,

One man shall break, even on their own
flood's vege,
That iron bulk of battle; but thine eye
That sees it now swell higher than sand
or shore
Haply shall see not when thine host
shall shrink.

Herald of Eumolpus. Not haply, nay,
but surely, shall not thine.

Chorus. That lot shall no god give
who fights for thee.

Herald of Eumolpus. Shall gods bear
bit and bridle, fool, of men?

Chorus. Nor them forbid we, nor shalt
thou constrain.

Herald of Eumolpus. Yet say'st thou
none shall make the good lot
mine?

Chorus. Of thy side none, nor moved
for fear of thee.

Herald of Eumolpus. Gods hast thou
then to baffle gods of ours?

Chorus. Nor thine nor mine, but
equal-souled are they.

Herald of Eumolpus. Toward good
and ill, then, equal-eyed of soul?

Chorus. Nay, but swift-eyed to note
where ill thoughts breed.

Herald of Eumolpus. Thy shaft word-
feathered flies yet far of me.

Chorus. Pride knows not, wounded,
till the heart be cleft.

Herald of Eumolpus. No shaft wounds
deep whose wing is plumed with
words.

Chorus. Lay that to heart, and bid
thy tongue learn grace.

Herald of Eumolpus. Grace shall thine
own crave soon too late of mine.

Chorus. Boast thou till then, but I
wage words no more.

Erechtheus. Man, what shrill wind of
speech and wrangling air

Blows in our ears a summons from thy
lips

Winged with what message, or what
gift or grace

Requiring? none but what his hand
may take

Here may the foe think hence to reap,
nor this

Except some doom from Godward yield
it him.

Herald of Eumolpus. King of this
land-folk, by my mouth to thee
Thus saith the son of him that shakes
thine earth,

Eumolpus; now the stakes of war are
set,

For land or sea to win by throw and
wear;

Choose therefore or to quit thy side,
and give

The palm unfought for to his bloodless
hand,

Or by that father's sceptre, and the foot
Whose tramp far off makes tremble for
pure fear

Thy soul-struck mother, piercing like a
sword

The immortal womb that bare thee; by
the waves

That no man bridles, and that bound
thy world,

And by the winds and storms of all the
sea,

He swears to raze from eyeshot of the
sun

This city named not of his father's
name,

And wash to deathward down one flood
of doom

This whole fresh brood of earth yeaned
naturally,

Green yet and faint in its first blade,
unblown

With yellow hope of harvest: so do
thou,

Seeing whom thy time is come to meet,
for fear

Yield, or gird up thy force to fight and
die.

Erechtheus. To fight then be it; for
if to die or live,

No man but only a god knows this
much yet,

Seeing us fare forth, who bear but in
our hands

The weapons not the fortunes of our
fight;

For these now rest as lots that yet
undrawn

Lie in the lap of the unknown hour;
but this

I know, not thou, whose hollow mouth
of storm

Is but a warlike wind, a sharp salt
 breath
 That bites and wounds not; death nor
 life of mine
 Shall give to death or lordship of
 strange kings
 The soul of this live city, nor their
 heel
 Bruise her dear brow discrowned, nor
 snaffle or goad
 Wound her free mouth or stain her
 sanguine side
 Yet masterless of man; so bid thy lord
 Learn ere he weep to learn it, and too
 late
 Gnash teeth that could not fasten on
 her flesh,
 And foam his life out in dark froth of
 blood
 Vain as a wind's waif of the loud-
 mouthed sea,
 Torn from the wave's edge whitening.
 Tell him this;
 Though thrice his might were mustered
 for our scathe
 And thicker set with fence of thorn-
 edged spears
 Than sands are whirled about the win-
 tering beach
 When storms have swoln the rivers,
 and their blasts
 Have breached the broad sea-banks
 with stress of sea,
 That waves of inland and the main
 make war
 As men that mix and grapple; though
 his ranks
 Were more to number than all wild-
 wood leaves
 The wind waves on the hills of all the
 world,
 Yet should the heart not faint, the head
 not fall,
 The breath not fail, of Athens. Say,
 the gods
 From lips that have no more on earth
 to say
 Have told thee this the last good news
 or ill
 That I shall speak in sight of earth and
 sun
 Or he shall hear and see them: for the
 next

That ear of his from tongue of mine
 may take
 Must be the first word spoken under-
 ground
 From dead to dead in darkness. Hence;
 make haste,
 Lest war's fleet foot be swifter than thy
 tongue,
 And I that part not to return again
 On him that comes not to depart
 away
 Be fallen before thee; for the time is
 full,
 And with such mortal hope as knows
 not fear
 I go this high last way to the end of
 all.
Chorus. Who shall put a bridle in
 the mourner's lips to chasten
 them,
 Or seal up the fountains of his tears
 for shame?
 Song nor prayer nor prophecy shall
 slacken tears nor hasten them,
 Till grief be within him as a burnt-
 out flame;
 Till the passion be broken in his
 breast,
 And the might thereof molten
 into rest,
 And the rain of eyes that weep be
 dry,
 And the breath be stilled of lips
 that sigh.
 Death at last for all men is a harbor;
 yet they flee from it,
 Set sails to the storm-wind, and again
 to sea;
 Yet for all their labor no whit further
 shall they be from it,
 Nor longer, but wearier, shall their
 life's work be.
 And with anguish of travail until
 night
 Shall they steer into shipwreck out
 of sight,
 And with oars that break and
 shrouds that strain
 Shall they drive whence no ship
 steers again.
 Bitter and strange is the word of the
 god most high,
 And steep the strait of his way.

Through a pass rock-rimmed and narrow
 the light that gleams
 On the faces of men falls faint as the
 dawn of dreams,
 The dayspring of death as a star in an
 under sky

Where night is the dead men's day.
 As darkness and storm is his will that
 on earth is done,

As a cloud is the face of his strength.
 King of kings, holiest of holies, and
 mightiest of might,

Lord of the lords of thine heaven that
 are humble in thy sight,

Hast thou set not an end for the path
 of the fires of the sun,

To appoint him a rest at length?
 Hast thou told not by measure the
 waves of the waste wide sea,

And the ways of the wind their master
 and thrall to thee?

Hast thou filled not the furrows
 with fruit for the world's increase?

Has thine ear not heard from of old, or
 thine eye not read

The thought and the deed of us living,
 the doom of us dead?

Hast thou made not war upon
 earth, and again made peace?

Therefore, O father, that seest us whose
 lives are a breath,

Take off us thy burden, and give us
 not wholly to death

For lovely is life, and the law
 wherein all things live,

And gracious the season of each, and
 the hour of its kind,

And precious the seed of his life in a
 wise man's mind;

But all save life for his life will a
 base man give.

But a life that is given for the life of
 the whole live land,

From a heart unspotted a gift of a
 spotless hand,

Of pure will perfect and free, for the
 land's life's sake,

What man shall fear not to put forth
 his hand and take?

For the fruit of a sweet life plucked in
 its pure green prime

On his hand who plucks is as blood, on
 his soul as crime.

With cursing ye buy not blessing, not
 peace with strife,
 And the hand is hateful that chaffers
 with death for life.

Hast thou heard, O my heart, and
 endurest

The word that is said,
 What a garland by sentence found
 surest

Is wrought for what head?

With what blossomless flowerage of
 sea-foam and blood-colored foli-
 age inwound

It shall crown as a heifer's for slaughter
 the forehead for marriage un-
 crowned?

How the veils and the wreaths that
 should cover

The brows of the bride
 Shall be shed by the breath of
 what lover,

And scattered aside?

With a blast of the mouth of what
 bridegroom the crowns shall be
 cast from her hair,

And her head by what altar made
 humble be left of them naked
 and bare?

At a shrine unbeloved of a god unbe-
 holden a gift shall be given for
 the land,

That its ramparts though shaken with
 clamor and horror of manifold
 waters may stand;

That the crests of its citadels crowned
 and its turrets that thrust up their
 heads to the sun

May behold him unblinded with dark-
 ness of waves overmastering
 their bulwarks begun.

As a bride shall they bring her,
 a prey for the bridegroom, a
 flower for the couch of her
 lord;

They shall muffle her mouth that she
 cry not or curse them, and cover
 her eyes from the sword.

They shall fasten her lips as with bit
 and with bridle, and darken the
 light of her face,

That the soul of the slayer may not
 falter, his heart be not molten,
 his hand give not grace.

If she weep then, yet may none that
 hear take pity;
 If she cry not, none should hearken
 though she cried.
 Sha! a virgin shield thine head for
 love, O city,
 With a virgin's blood anointed as
 for pride?
 Yet we held thee dear and hallowed
 of her favor,
 Dear of all men held thy people
 to her heart;
 Nought she loves the breath of blood,
 the sanguine savor,
 Who hath built with us her throne
 and chosen her part.
 Bloodless are her works, and
 sweet
 All the ways that feel her feet;
 From the empire of her eyes
 Light takes life, and darkness flies;
 From the harvest of her hands
 Wealth strikes root in prosperous
 lands;
 Wisdom of her word is made;
 At her strength is strength afraid;
 From the beam of her bright spear
 War's fleet foot goes back for fear;
 In her shrine she reared the birth
 Fire-begotten on live earth;
 Glory from her helm was shed
 On his olive-shadowed head;
 By no hand but his shall she
 Scourge the storms back of the sea,
 To no fame but his shall give
 Grace, being dead, with hers to
 live,
 And in double name divine
 Half the godhead of their shrine.
 But now with what word, with what
 woe may we meet
 The timeless passage of piteous feet,
 Hither that bend to the last way's end
 They shall walk upon earth?
 What song be rolled for a bride black-
 stoled
 And the mother whose hand of her
 hand hath hold?
 For anguish of heart is my soul's
 strength broken,
 And the tongue sealed fast that would
 fain have spoken,

To behold thee, O child of so bitter a
 birth
 That we counted so sweet,
 What way thy steps to what bride-
 feast tend,
 What gift he must give that shall wed
 thee for token
 If the bridegroom be goodly to greet.
Chthonia. People, old men of my
 city, lordly wise and hoar of head,
 I, a spouseless bride, and crownless but
 with garlands of the dead,
 From the fruitful light turn silent to
 my dark unchilded bed.
Chorus. Wise of word was he too
 surely, but with deadlier wisdom
 wise,
 First who gave thee name from under
 earth, no breath from upper skies,
 When, foredoomed to this day's dark-
 ness, their first daylight filled
 thine eyes.
Praxithea. Child, my child that wast,
 and art but death's and now no
 more of mine,
 Half my heart is cloven with anguish
 by the sword made sharp for
 thine,
 Half exalts its wing for triumph, that
 I bare thee thus divine.
Chthonia. Though for me the sword's
 edge thirst that sets no point
 against thy breast,
 Mother, O my mother, where I drank
 of life and fell on rest,
 Thine, not mine, is all the grief that
 marks this hour accurst and
 blest.
Chorus. Sweet thy sleep and sweet
 the bosom was that gave thee
 sleep and birth;
 Harder now the breast, and girded with
 no marriage-band for girth,
 Where thine head shall sleep, the name-
 child of the lords of under earth.
Praxithea. Dark the name and dark
 the gifts they gave thee, child, in
 childbirth were,
 Sprung from him that rent the womb
 of earth, a bitter seed to bear,
 Born with groanings of the ground that
 gave him way toward heaven's
 dear air.

Chthonia. Day to day makes answer,
 first to last, and life to death;
 but I,
 Born for death's sake, die for life's
 sake, if indeed this be to die,
 This my doom that seals me deathless
 till the springs of time run dry.

Chorus. Children shalt thou bear to
 memory, that to man shalt bring
 forth none;
 Yea, the lordliest that lift eyes and
 hearts and songs to meet the
 sun,
 Names to fire men's ears like music till
 the round world's race be run.

Praxithea. I thy mother, named of
 gods that wreak revenge and
 brand with blame,
 Now for thy love shall be loved as thou,
 and famous with thy fame,
 While this city's name on earth shall
 be for earth her mightiest name.

Chthonia. That I may give this poor
 girl's blood of mine
 Scarce yet sun-warmed with summer,
 this thin life
 Still green with flowerless growth of
 seedling days,
 To build again my city; that no drop
 Fallen of these innocent veins on the
 cold ground
 But shall help knit the joints of her
 firm walls
 To knead the stones together, and
 make sure
 The band about her maiden girdlestead
 Once fastened, and of all men's violent
 hands
 Inviolable forever, — these to me
 Were no such gifts as crave no thanks-
 giving,
 If with one blow dividing the sheer
 life
 I might make end, and one pang wind
 up all,
 And seal mine eyes from sorrow; for
 such end
 The gods give none they love not; but
 my heart,
 That leaps up lightened of all sloth or
 fear
 To take the sword's point, yet with one
 thought's load

Flags, and falls back, broken of wing,
 that halts
 Maimed in mid flight for thy sake, and
 borne down,
 Mother, that in the places where I
 played
 An arm's-length from thy bosom and
 no more
 Shalt find me never, nor thine eye wax
 glad
 To mix with mine its eyesight, and for
 love
 Laugh without word, filled with sweet
 light, and speak
 Divine dumb things of the inward
 spirit and heart,
 Moved silently; nor hand or lip again
 Touch hand or lip of either, but for
 mine
 Shall thine meet only shadows of swift
 night,
 Dreams and dead thoughts of dead
 things; and the bed
 Thou strewedst, a sterile place for all
 time, strewn
 For my sleep only, with its void sad
 sheets
 Shall vex thee, and the unfruitful cover-
 lid
 For empty days reproach me dead, that
 leave
 No profit of my body, but am gone
 As not one worth being born to bear
 no seed,
 A sapless stock and branchless; yet
 thy womb
 Shall want not honor of me, that
 brought forth
 For all this people freedom, and for
 earth
 From the unborn city born out of my
 blood
 To light the face of all men ever-
 more
 Glory; but lay thou this to thy great
 heart
 Whereunder in the dark of birth con-
 ceived
 Mine unlit life lay girdled with the
 zone
 That bound thy bridal bosom; set this
 thought
 Against all edge of evil as a sword

To beat back sorrow, that for all the
 world
 Thou brought'st me forth a savior, who
 shall save
 Athens; for none but I, from none but
 thee,
 Shall take this death for garland; and
 the men
 Mine unknown children of unsounded
 years,
 My sons unrisen shall rise up at thine
 hand,
 Sown of thy seed to bring forth seed
 to thee,
 And call thee most of all most fruitful
 found
 Blessed; but me too for my barren
 womb,
 More than my sisters for their children
 born,
 Shall these give honor, yea in scorn's
 own place
 Shall men set love, and bring for mock-
 ery praise,
 And thanks for curses; for the dry
 wild vine,
 Scoffed at and cursed of all men, that
 was I,
 Shall shed them wine to make the
 world's heart warm,
 That all eyes seeing may lighten, and
 all ears
 Hear and be kindled; such a draught
 to drink
 Shall be the blood that bids this dust
 bring forth,
 The chalice life here spilt on this
 mine earth,
 Mine, my great father's mother; whom
 I pray
 Take me now gently, tenderly take
 home,
 And softly lay in his my cold chaste
 hand
 Who is called of men by my name,
 being of gods
 Charged only and chosen to bring men
 under earth,
 And now must lead and stay me with
 his staff,
 A silent soul led of a silent god,
 Toward sightless things led sightless;
 and on earth

I see now but the shadow of mine end,
 And this last light of all for me in
 heaven.
Praxithea. Farewell I bid thee; so
 bid thou not me,
 Lest the gods hear and mock us: yet
 on these
 I lay the weight not of this grief, nor
 cast
 Ill words for ill deeds back; for if one
 say
 They have done men wrong, what hurt
 have they to hear,
 Or he what help to have said it? surely,
 child,
 If one among men born might say it
 and live
 Blameless, none more than I may, who
 being vexed
 Hold yet my peace; for now through
 tears enough
 Mine eyes have seen the sun that from
 this day
 Thine shall see never more; and in the
 night
 Enough has blown of evil, and mine
 ears
 With wail enough the winds have filled,
 and brought
 Too much of cloud from over the sharp
 sea
 To mar for me the morning; such a
 blast
 Rent from these wide void arms and
 helpless breast
 Long since one graft of me disbranched,
 and bore
 Beyond the wild ways of the unwan-
 dered world,
 And loud wastes of the thunder
 throated sea,
 Springs of the night and openings of
 the heaven,
 The old garden of the Sun; whence
 never more
 From west or east shall winds bring
 back that blow
 From folds of opening heaven or founts
 of night
 The flower of mine once ravished, born
 my child
 To bear strange children; nor on wings
 of theirs

Shall comfort come back to me, nor
 their sire
 Breathe help upon my peril, nor his
 strength
 Raise up my weakness; but of gods
 and men
 I drift unsteered on ruin, and the wave
 Darkens my head with imminent height,
 and hangs
 Dumb, filled too full with thunder that
 shall leave
 These ears death-deafened when the
 tide finds tongue,
 And all its wrath bears on them; thee,
 O child,
 I help not, nor am holpen; fain, ah
 fain,
 More than was ever mother born of
 man,
 Were I to help thee; fain beyond all
 prayer,
 Beyond all thought fain to redeem thee,
 torn
 More timeless from me sorrowing than
 the dream
 That was thy sister; so shalt thou be
 too,
 Thou but a vision, shadow-shaped of
 sleep,
 By grief made out of nothing; now
 but once
 I touch, but once more hold thee, one
 more kiss
 This last time, and none other ever
 more,
 Leave on thy lips, and leave them. Go.
 Thou wast
 My heart, my heart's blood, life-blood
 of my life,
 My child, my nursling: now this breast
 once thine
 Shall rear again no children; never
 now
 Shall any mortal blossom born like
 thee
 Lie there, nor ever with small silent
 mouth
 Draw the sweet springs dry for an hour
 that feed
 The blind blithe life that knows not;
 never head
 Rest here to make these cold veins
 warm, nor eye

Laugh itself open with the lips that
 reach
 Lovingly toward a fount more loving;
 these
 Death makes as all good lesser things
 now dead,
 And all the latter hopes that flowered
 from these,
 And fall as these fell fruitless; no joy
 more
 Shall man take of thy maidenhood, no
 tongue
 Praise it; no good shall eyes get more
 of thee
 That lightened for thy love's sake.
 Now, take note,
 Give ear, O all ye people, that my
 word
 May pierce your hearts through, and
 the stroke that cleaves
 Be fruitful to them; so shall all that
 hear
 Grow great at heart with child of
 thought most high,
 And bring forth seed in season; this
 my child,
 This flower of this my body, this sweet
 life,
 This fair live youth I give you, to be
 slain,
 Spent, shed, poured out, and perish;
 take my gift,
 And give it death and the under gods
 who crave
 So much for that they give; for this is
 more,
 Much more is this than all we; for they
 give
 Freedom, and for a blast, an air of
 breath,
 A little soul that is not, they give back
 Light for all eyes, cheer for all hearts,
 and life
 That fills the world's width full of
 fame and praise
 And mightier love than children's.
 This they give,
 The grace to make thy country great,
 and wrest
 From time and death power to take
 hold on her,
 And strength to scathe forever; and
 this gift,

Is this no more than man's love is or mine,
 Mine and all mothers'? nay, where that seems more,
 Where one loves life of child, wife, father, friend,
 Son, husband, mother, more than this, even there
 Are all these lives worth nothing, all loves else
 With this love slain and buried, and their tomb
 A thing for shame to spit on; for what love
 Hath a slave left to love with? or the heart
 Base-born and bound in bondage fast to fear,
 What should it do to love thee? what hath he,
 The man that hath no country? Gods nor men
 Have such to friend, yoked beast-like to base life,
 Vile, fruitless, grovelling at the foot of death,
 Landless and kinless thralls of no man's blood,
 Unchilded and unmothered, abject limbs
 That breed things abject; but who loves on earth
 Not friend, wife, husband, father, mother, child,
 Nor loves his own life for his own land's sake,
 But only this thing most, more this than all,
 He loves all well, and well of all is loved,
 And this love lives forever. See now, friends,
 My countrymen, my brothers, with what heart
 I give you this that of your hands again
 The gods require for Athens: as I give,
 So give ye to them what their hearts would have
 Who shall give back things better; yea, and these
 I take for me to witness, all these gods,
 Were their great will more grievous than it is,

Not one but three, for this one thin-spun thread
 A threefold band of children would I give
 For this land's love's sake; for whose love to-day
 I bid thee, child, fare deathward and farewell.
Chorus. O wofullest of women, yet of all
 Happiest, thy word be hallowed; in all time
 Thy name shall blossom, and from strange new tongues
 High things be spoken of thee; for such grace
 The gods have dealt to no man, that on none
 Have laid so heavy sorrow. From this day
 Live thou assured of godhead in thy blood,
 And in thy fate no lowlier than a god
 In all good things and evil; such a name
 Shall be thy child this city's, and thine own
 Next hers that called it Athens. Go now forth
 Blest, and grace with thee to the doors of death.
Chthonia. O city, O glory of Athens, O crown of my father's land, farewell.
Chorus. For welfare is given her of thee.
Chthonia. O goddess, be good to thy people, that in them dominion and freedom may dwell.
Chorus. Turn from us the strengths of the sea.
Chthonia. Let glory's and theirs be one name in the mouths of all nations made glad with the sun.
Chorus. For the cloud is blown back with thy breath.
Chthonia. With the long last love of mine eyes I salute thee, O land where my days now are done.
Chorus. But her life shall be born of thy death.
Chthonia. I put on me the darkness thy shadow, my mother, and symbol, O Earth, of my name.

- Chorus.* For thine was her witness
from birth.
- Chthonia.* In thy likeness I come to
thee darkling, a daughter whose
dawn and her even are the same.
- Chorus.* Be thine heart to her gra-
cious, O Earth!
- Chthonia.* To thine own kind be kindly,
for thy son's name's sake.
- Chorus.* That sons unborn may praise
thee and thy first-born son.
- Chthonia.* Give me thy sleep, who give
thee all my life awake.
- Chorus.* Too swift a sleep, ere half
the web of day be spun.
- Chthonia.* Death brings the shears or
ever life wind up the weft.
- Chorus.* Their edge is ground and
sharpened: who shall stay his
hand?
- Chthonia.* The woof is thin, a small
short life, with no thread left.
- Chorus.* Yet hath it strength,
stretched out, to shelter all the
land.
- Chthonia.* Too frail a tent for covering,
and a screen too strait.
- Chorus.* Yet broad enough for buck-
ler shall thy sweet life be.
- Chthonia.* A little bolt to bar off bat-
tle from the gate.
- Chorus.* A wide sea-wall, that shat-
ters the besieging sea.
- Chthonia.* I lift up mine eyes from
the skirts of the shadow,
From the border of death to the limits
of light;
O streams and rivers of mountain and
meadow
That hallow the last of my sight,
O father that wast of my mother,
Cephisus, O thou too his brother
From the bloom of whose banks as
a prey
Winds harried my sister away,
O crown on the world's head lying
Too high for its waters to drown,
Take yet this one word of me dying,
O city, O crown!
- Though land-wind and sea-wind with
mouths that blow slaughter
Should gird them to battle against
thee again,
- New-born of the blood of a maiden thy
daughter,
The rage of their breath shall be
vain.
For their strength shall be quenched
and made idle,
And the foam of their mouths find a
bridle,
And the height of their heads bow
down
At the foot of the towers of the
town.
Be blest and beloved as I love thee
Of all that shall draw from thee
breath;
Be thy life as the sun's is above thee:
I go to my death.
- Chorus.* Many loves of many a mood
and many a kind
Fill the life of man, and mould the
secret mind;
Many days bring many dooms, to loose
and bind;
Sweet is each in season, good the gift
it brings,
Sweet as change of night and day with
altering wings,
Night that lulls world-weary day, day
that comforts night,
Night that fills our eyes with sleep, day
that fills with light.
None of all is lovelier, loftier love is
none,
Less is bride's for bridegroom, moth-
er's less for son,
Child, than this that crowns and binds
up all in one;
Love of thy sweet light, thy fostering
breast and hand,
Mother Earth, and city chosen, and
natural land;
Hills that bring the strong streams forth,
heights of heavenlier air,
Fields aflower with winds and suns,
woods with shadowing hair.
But none of the nations of men shall
they liken to thee,
Whose children true-born and the fruit
of thy body are we.
The rest are thy sons but in figure, in
word are thy seed;
We only the flower of thy travail, thy
children indeed.

Of thy soil hast thou fashioned our
limbs, of thy waters their blood,
And the life of thy springs everlasting
is fount of our flood.

No wind oversea blew us hither adrift
on thy shore,

None sowed us by land in thy womb
that conceived us and bore.

But the stroke of the shaft of the sun-
light that brought us to birth

Pierced only and quickened thy furrows
to bear us, O Earth!

With the beams of his love wast thou
cloven as with iron or fire,

And the life in thee yearned for his life,
and grew great with desire.

And the hunger and thirst to be
wounded and healed with his
dart

Made fruitful the love in thy veins and
the depth of thine heart.

And the showers out of heaven over-
flowing and liquid with love

Fulfilled thee with child of his god-
head as rain from above.

Such desire had ye twain of each other,
till molten in one

Ye might bear and beget of your bodies
the fruits of the sun.

And the trees in their season brought
forth and were kindled anew

By the warmth of the moisture of mari-
riage, the child-bearing dew.

And the firstlings were fair of the wed-
lock of heaven and of earth;

All countries were bounteous with blos-
som and bourgeon of birth,

Green pastures of grass for all cattle,
and life-giving corn;

But here of thy bosom, here only, the
man-child was born.

All races but one are as aliens ingrafted
or sown,

Strange children and changelings; but
we, O our mother, thine own.

Thy nurslings are others, and seedlings
they know not of whom;

For these hast thou fostered, but us
thou hast borne in thy womb.

Who is he of us all, O beloved, that
owe thee for birth,

Who would give not his blood for his
birth's sake, O mother, O Earth?

What landsman is he that was fos-
tered and reared of thine hand
Who may vaunt him as we may in
death though he die for the land?

Well doth she therefore who gives thee
in guerdon

The bloom of the life of thy giving;
And thy body was bowed by no fruitless
burden,

That bore such fruit of thee living.
For her face was not darkened for
fear,

For her eyelids conceived not a tear,
Nor a cry from her lips craved pity;
But her mouth was a fountain of song,
And her heart as a citadel strong

That guards the heart of the city
Messenger. High things of strong-
souled men that loved their land
On brass and stone are written, and
their deeds

On high days chanted; but none graven
or sung

That ever set men's eyes or spirits on
fire,

Athenians, has the sun's height seen, or
earth

Heard in her depth reverberate as from
heaven,

More worth men's praise and good re-
port of gods

Than here I bring for record in your
ears.

For now being come to the altar, where
as priest

Death ministering should meet her, and
his hand

Seal her sweet eyes asleep, the maiden
stood,

With light in all her face as of a bride
Smiling, or shine of festal flame by
night

Far flung from towers of triumph; and
her lips

Trembled with pride in pleasure, that
no fear

Blanched them nor death before his
time drank dry

The blood whose bloom fulfilled them;
for her cheeks

Lightened, and brighter than a bridal
veil

Her hair enrobed her bosom, and en-
 rolled
 From face to feet the body's whole soft
 length
 As with a cloud sun-saturate; then she
 spake
 With maiden tongue words manlike,
 but her eyes
 Lit mildly like a maiden's: *Country-*
men,
With more good-will and height of hap-
pier heart
I give me to you than my mother bare,
And go more gladly this great way to
death
Than young men bound to battle. Then
 with face
 Turned to the shadowiest part of all
 the shrine,
 And eyes fast set upon the further
 shade,
Take me, dear gods; and as some form
had shone
 From the deep hollow shadow, some
 god's tongue
 Answered, *I bless you that your guardian*
grace
Gives me to guard this country, takes my
blood,
Your child's by name, to heal it. Then
 the priest
 Set to the flower-sweet snow of her
 soft throat
 The sheer knife's edge that severed it,
 and loosed
 From the fair bondage of so spotless
 flesh
 So strong a spirit; and all that girt
 them round,
 Gazing, with souls that hung on that
 sad stroke,
 Groaned, and kept silence after while a
 man
 Might count how far the fresh blood
 crept, and bathed
 How deep the dark robe and the bright
 shrine's base
 Red-rounded with a running ring that
 grew
 More large and duskier as the wells
 that fed
 Were drained of that pure effluence.
 But the queen

Groaned not nor spake nor wept, but
 as a dream
 Floats out of eyes awakening, so passed
 forth
 Ghost-like, a shadow of sorrow, from
 all sight,
 To the inner court and chamber where
 she sits
 Dumb, till word reach her of this whole
 day's end.
Chorus. More hapless born by far
 Beneath some wintrier star,
 One sits in stone among high Lydian
 snows,
 The tomb of her own woes:
 Yet happiest was once of the daughters
 of gods, and divine by her sire
 and her lord,
 Ere her tongue was a shaft for the
 hearts of her sons, for the heart
 of her husband a sword.
 For she, too great of mind,
 Grown through her good things
 blind,
 With godless lips and fire of her own
 breath
 Spake all her house to death;
 But thou, no mother unmothered, nor
 kindled in spirit with pride of
 thy seed,
 Thou hast hallowed thy child for a
 blameless blood-offering, and
 ransomed thy race by thy deed.
Messenger. As flower is grafted or
 flower, so grief on grief
 Engrafted brings forth new blossoms
 of strange tears,
 Fresh buds and green fruits of an alien
 pain;
 For now flies rumor on a dark wide
 wing,
 Murmuring of woes more than ye
 knew, most like
 Hers whom ye hailed most wretched;
 for the twain
 Last left of all this house that wore
 last night
 A threefold crown of maidens, and to-
 day
 Should let but one fall dead out of the
 wreath,
 If mad with grief we know not, and
 sore love

For this their sister, or with shame
 soul-stung
 To outlive her dead, or doubt lest their
 lives too
 The gods require to seal their country
 safe,
 And bring the oracular doom to perfect
 end,
 Have slain themselves, and fallen at
 the altar-foot
 Lie by their own hands done to death;
 and fear
 Shakes all the city as winds a wintering
 tree,
 And as dead leaves are men's hearts
 blown about
 And shrunk with ill thoughts, and
 flowerless hopes
 Parched up with presage, lest the pit-
 eous blood
 Shed of these maidens guiltless fall and fix
 On this land's forehead like a curse that
 cleaves
 To the unclean soul's inextinguishable
 head
 Whom his own crime tracks hotter
 than a hound
 To life's veiled end unsleeping; and
 this hour
 Now blackens toward the battle that
 must close
 All gates of hope and fear on all their
 hearts
 Who tremble toward its issue, knowing
 not yet
 If blood may buy them surety, cleanse
 or soil
 The helpless hands men raise, and reach
 no stay.
Chorus. Ill thoughts breed fear, and
 fear ill words; but these
 The gods turn from us that have kept
 their law.
 Let us lift up the strength of our
 hearts in song,
 And our souls to the height of the
 darkling day.
 If the wind in our eyes blow blood
 for spray,
 Be the spirit that breathes in us life
 more strong,
 Though the prow reel round, and the
 helm point wrong,

And sharp reefs whiten the shore-
 ward way.
 For the steersman Time sits hidden
 astern,
 With dark hand plying the rudder
 of doom,
 And the surf-smoke under it flies
 like fume
 As the blast shears off and the oar-
 blades churn
 The foam of our lives that to death
 return,
 Blown back as they break to the
 gulfing gloom.
 What cloud upon heaven is arisen,
 what shadow, what sound,
 From the world beyond earth, from
 the night underground,
 That scatters from wings unheeded the
 weight of its darkness around?
 For the sense of my spirit is broken,
 and blinded its eye,
 As the soul of a sick man ready to
 die,
 With fear of the hour that is on me,
 with dread if an end be not nigh.
 O Earth, O gods of the land, have
 ye heart now to see and to hear
 What slays with terror mine eye-
 sight, and seals mine ear?
 O fountains of streams everlasting, are
 all ye not shrunk up and withered
 for fear?
 Lo, night is arisen on the noon, and
 her hounds are in quest by day,
 And the world is fulfilled of the
 noise of them crying for their
 prey,
 And the sun's self stricken in heaven-
 and cast out of his course as a
 blind man astray.
 From east to west of the south sea-
 line,
 Glitters the lightning of spears that
 shine;
 As a storm-cloud swollen that comes up
 from the skirts of the sea,
 By the wind for helmsman to shore-
 ward ferried,
 So black behind them the live storm
 serried
 Shakes earth with the tramp of its foot,
 and the terror to be.

Shall the sea give death whom the
 land gave birth?
 O Earth, fair mother, O sweet live
 Earth,
 Hide us again in thy womb from the
 waves of it, help us or hide.
 As a sword is the heart of the god
 thy brother,
 But thine as the heart of a new-made
 mother,
 To deliver thy sons from his ravin, and
 rage of his tide.
 O strong north wind, the pilot of
 cloud and rain,
 For the gift we gave thee what gift
 hast thou given us again?
 O god dark-winged, deep-throated, a ter-
 ror to forth-faring ships by night,
 What bride-song is this that is blown
 on the blast of thy breath?
 A gift but of grief to thy kinsmen, a
 song but of death,
 For the bride's folk weeping, and woe
 for her father, who finds thee
 against him in fight.
 Turn back from us, turn thy battle,
 take heed of our cry;
 Let thy dread breath sound, and the
 waters of war be dry;
 Let thy strong wrath shatter the strength
 of our foemen, the sword of their
 strength and the shield;
 As vapors in heaven, or as waves
 or the wrecks of ships,
 So break thou the ranks of their
 spears with the breath of thy lips,
 Till their corpses have covered and
 clothed as with raiment the face
 of the sword-ploughed field.
 O son of the rose-red morning, O
 god twin-born with the day,
 O wind with the young sun waking,
 and winged for the same wide
 way,
 Give up not the house of thy kin to
 the host thou hast marshalled
 from northward for prey.
 From the cold of thy cradle in
 Thrace, from the mists of the
 fountains of night,
 From the bride-bed of dawn whence
 day leaps laughing, on fire for
 his light,

Come down with their doom in thine
 hand on the ships thou hast
 brought up against us to fight.
 For now not in word but in deed is the
 harvest of spears begun,
 And its clamor outbellows the thunder,
 its lightning outlightens the sun.
 From the springs of the morning it
 thunders and lightens across
 and afar
 To the wave where the moonset ends,
 and the fall of the last low
 star.
 With a trampling of drenched red hoofs
 and an earthquake of men that
 meet,
 Strong War sets hand to the scythe, and
 the furrows take fire from his
 feet.
 Earth groans from her great rent heart,
 and the hollows of rocks are
 afraid,
 And the mountains are moved, and the
 valleys as waves in a storm-wind
 swayed.
 From the roots of the hills to the
 plain's dim verge and the dark
 loud shore,
 Air shudders with shrill spears cross-
 ing, and hurtling of wheels that
 roar.
 As the grinding of teeth in the jaws of
 a lion that foam as they gnash,
 Is the shriek of the axles that loosen,
 the shock of the poles that
 crash.
 The dense manes darken and glitter,
 the mouths of the mad steeds
 champ,
 Their heads flash blind through the
 battle, and death's foot-rings in
 their tramp.
 For a fourfold host upon earth and in
 heaven is arrayed for the fight,
 Clouds ruining in thunder and armies
 encountering as clouds in the
 night.
 Mine ears are amazed with the terror
 of trumpets, with darkness mine
 eyes,
 At the sound of the sea's host charging
 that deafens the roar of the
 sky's.

White frontlet is dashed upon frontlet,
 and horse against horse reels
 hurled,
 And the gorge of the gulfs of the bat-
 tle is wide for the spoil of the
 world.
 And the meadows are cumbered with
 shipwreck of chariots that found-
 er on land,
 And the horsemen are broken with
 breach as of breakers, and scat-
 tered as sand.
 Through the roar and recoil of the
 charges that mingle their cries
 and confound,
 Like fire are the notes of the trumpets
 that flash through the darkness
 of sound.
 As the swing of the sea churned yellow
 that sways with the wind as it
 swells,
 Is the lift and relapse of the wave of
 the chargers that clash with their
 bells;
 And the clang of the sharp shrill brass
 through the burst of the wave as
 it shocks
 Rings clean as the clear winds cry
 through the roar of the surge on
 the rocks;
 And the heads of the steeds in their
 headgear of war, and their
 corseleted breasts,
 Gleam broad as the brows of the bil-
 lows that brighten the storm
 with their crests,
 Gleam dread as their bosoms that heave
 to the shipwrecking wind as they
 rise,
 Filled full of the terror and thunder of
 water, that slays as it dies.
 So dire is the glare of their fore-
 heads, so fearful the fire of their
 breath,
 And the light of their eyeballs en-
 kindled so bright with the light-
 nings of death;
 And the foam of their mouths as the
 sea's when the jaws of its gulf
 are as graves,
 And the ridge of their necks as the
 wind-shaken mane on the ridges
 of waves;

And their fetlocks afire as they rear
 drip thick with a dewfall of blood
 As the lips of the rearing breaker with
 froth of the man-slaying flood;
 And the whole plain reels and resounds
 as the fields of the sea by night
 When the stroke of the wind falls dark-
 ling, and death is the seafarer's
 light.

But thou, fair beauty of heaven, dear
 face of the day nigh dead,
 What horror hath hidden thy glory, what
 hand hath muffled thine head?

O sun, with what song shall we call
 thee, or ward off thy wrath by
 what name,

With what prayer shall we seek to thee,
 soothe with what incense, as-
 suage with what gift,

If thy light be such only as lightens to
 deathward the seaman adrift

With the fire of his house for a
 beacon, that foemen have wasted
 with flame?

Arise now, lift up thy light; give ear
 to us, put forth thine hand,

Reach toward us thy torch of deliver-
 ance, a lamp for the night of the
 land.

Thine eye is the light of the living,
 no lamp for the dead;

Oh, lift up the light of thine eye on
 the dark of our dread!

Who hath blinded thee? who hath
 prevailed on thee? who hath en-
 snared?

Who hath broken thy bow, and the
 shafts for thy battle prepared?

Have they found out a fetter to bind
 thee, a chain for thine arm that
 was bared?

Be the name of thy conqueror set forth,
 and the might of thy master de-
 clared.

O god, fair god of the morning, O
 glory of day,

What ails thee to cast from thy fore-
 head its garland away?

To pluck from thy temples their chap-
 let enwreathed of the light,

And bind on the brows of thy god
 head a frontlet of night?

Thou hast loosened the necks of thine
 horses, and goaded their flanks
 with affright,
 To the race of a course that we know
 not, on ways that are hid from
 our sight.
 As a wind through the darkness the
 wheels of their chariot are
 whirled,
 And the light of its passage is night
 on the face of the world.
 And there falls from the wings of thy
 glory no help from on high,
 But a shadow that smites us with fear
 and desire of thine eye.
 For our hearts are as reeds that a wind
 on the water bows down and
 goes by,
 To behold not thy comfort in heaven
 that hath left us untimely to die.
 But what light is it now leaps forth
 on the land
 Enkindling the waters and ways of
 the air
 From thy forehead made bare,
 From the gleam of thy bow-bearing
 hand?
 Hast thou set not thy right hand again
 to the string,
 With the back-bowed horns bent
 sharp for a spring
 And the barbed shaft drawn,
 Till the shrill steel sing, and the tense
 nerve ring,
 That pierces the heart of the dark
 with dawn,
 O huntsman, O king,
 When the flame of thy face hath twi-
 light in chase
 As a hound hath a blood-mottled fawn?
 He has glanced into golden the gray
 sea-strands,
 And the clouds are shot through with
 the fires of his hands,
 And the height of the hollow of
 heaven that he fills
 As the heart of a strong man is quick-
 ened and thrills;
 High over the folds of the low-lying
 lands,
 On the shadowless hills
 As a guard on his watch-tower he
 stands.

All earth and all ocean, all depth and
 all height,
 At the flash of an eyebeam are filled
 with his might:
 The sea roars backward, the storm
 drops dumb,
 And silence as dew on the fire of the
 fight
 Falls kind in our ears as his face in
 our sight
 With presage of peace to come.
 Fresh hope in my heart from the
 ashes of dread
 Leaps clear as a flame from the pyres
 of the dead,
 That joy out of woe
 May arise as the spring out of tempest
 and snow,
 With the flower-feasted month in her
 hands rose-red
 Borne soft as a babe from the bear-
 ing-bed.
 Yet it knows not indeed if a god be
 friend,
 If rescue may be from the rage of the
 sea,
 Or the wrath of its lord have
 end.
 For the season is full now of death
 or of birth,
 To bring forth life, or an end of all;
 And we know not if any thing stand
 or fall
 That is girdled about with the round
 sea's girth
 As a town with its wall;
 But thou that art highest of the gods
 most high,
 That art lord if we live, that art lord
 though we die,
 Have heed of the tongues of our ter-
 ror that cry
 For a grace to the children of Earth.
Athenian Herald. Sons of Athens,
 heavy-laden with the holy weight
 of years,
 Be your hearts as young men's lightened
 of their loathlier load of fears;
 For the wave is sunk whose thunder
 shoreward shook the shuddering
 lands,
 And unbreached of warring waters
 Athens like a sea-rock stands.

Chorus. Well thy word has cheered us, well thy face and glittering eyes, that spake

Ere thy tongue spake words of comfort; yet no pause behoves it make

Till the whole good hap find utterance that the gods have given at length.

Athenian Herald. All is this, that yet the city stands unforced by stranger strength.

Chorus. Sweeter sound might no mouth utter in man's ear than this thy word.

Athenian Herald. Feed thy soul then full of sweetness till some bitterer note be heard.

Chorus. None, if this ring sure, can mar the music fallen from heaven as rain.

Athenian Herald. If no fire of sun or star untimely sear the tender grain.

Chorus. Fresh the dewfall of thy tidings on our hopes reflowering lies.

Athenian Herald. Till a joyless shower and fruitless blight them, raining from thine eyes.

Chorus. Bitter springs have barren issues; these bedew grief's arid sands.

Athenian Herald. Such thank-offerings ask such altars as expect thy suppliant hands.

Chorus. Tears for triumph, wail for welfare, what strange godhead's shrine requires?

Athenian Herald. Death's or victory's be it, a funeral torch feeds all its festal fires.

Chorus. Like a star should burn the beacon flaming from our city's head.

Athenian Herald. Like a balefire should the flame go up that says the king is dead.

Chorus. Out of heaven, a wild-haired meteor, shoots this new sign, scattering fear.

Athenian Herald. Yea, the word has wings of fire that hovered, loath to burn thine ear.

Chorus. From thy lips it leapt forth loosened on a shrill and shadowy wing.

Athenian Herald. Long they faltered, fain to hide it deep as death that hides the king.

Chorus. Dead with him blind hope lies blasted by the lightning of one sword.

Athenian Herald. On thy tongue truth wars with error: no man's edge hath touched thy lord.

Chorus. False was thine then, jangling menace like a war-steed's brow-bound bell?

Athenian Herald. False it rang not joy nor sorrow; but by no man's hand he fell.

Chorus. Vainly then good news and evil through so faint a trumpet spake.

Athenian Herald. All too long thy soul yet labors, as who sleeping fain would wake,

Waking, fain would fall on sleep again; the woe thou knowest not yet,

When thou knowest, shall make thy memory thirst and hunger to forget.

Chorus. Long my heart has hearkened, hanging on thy clamorous ominous cry,

Fain yet fearful of the knowledge whence it looks to live or die;

Now to take the perfect presage of thy dark and sidelong flight

Comes a surer soothsayer sorrowing, sable-stoled as birds of night.

Praxithea. Man, what thy mother bare thee born to say,

Speak; for no word yet wavering on thy lip

Can wound me worse than thought forestalls or fear.

Athenian Herald. I have no will to weave too fine or far,

O queen, the web of sweet with bitter speech,

Bright words with darkling; but the brief truth shown

Shall plead my pardon for a lingering tongue,

Loath yet to strike hope through the heart, and slay.
 The sun's light still was lordly housed in heaven
 When the twain fronts of war encountering smote
 First fire out of the battle; but not long
 Had the fresh wave of windy fight begun
 Heaving, and all the surge of swords to sway,
 When timeless night laid hold of heaven, and took
 With its great gorge the noon as in a gulf,
 Strangled; and thicker than the shrill-winged shafts
 Flew the fleet lightnings, held in chase through heaven
 By headlong heat of thunders on their trail
 Loosed as on quest of quarry; that our host,
 Smit with sick presage of some wrathful god,
 Quailed, but the foe as from one iron throat
 With one great sheer sole thousand-throated cry
 Shook earth, heart-staggered from their shout, and clove
 The eyeless hollow of heaven; and breached therewith
 As with an onset of strength-shattering sound,
 The rent vault of the roaring noon of night
 From her throned seat of usurpation rang
 Reverberate answer; such response there pealed
 As though the tide's charge of a storming sea
 Had burst the sky's wall, and made broad a breach
 In the ambient girth and bastion flanked with stars
 Guarding the fortress of the gods, and all
 Crashed now together on ruin; and through that cry,
 And higher above it, ceasing, one man's note

Tore its way like a trumpet: *Charge, make end,*
Charge, halt not, strike, rend up their strength by the roots,
Strike, break them, make your birth-right's promise sure,
Show your hearts hardier than the fenced land breeds,
And souls breathed in you from no spirit of earth,
Sons of the sea's waves! And all ears that heard
 Rang with that fiery cry, that the fine air
 Thereat was fired, and kindling filled the plain
 Full of that fierce and trumpet-quenching breath
 That spake the clarions silent; no glad song
 For folk to hear that wist how dire a god
 Begat this peril to them, what strong race
 Fathered the sea-born tongue that sang them death,
 Threatening: so ragged through the red foam of fight
 Poseidon's son Eumolpus; and the war
 Quailed round him coming, and our side bore back,
 As a stream thwarted by the wind and sea
 That meet it midway mouth to mouth, and beat
 The flood back of its issue; but the king
 Shouted against them, crying, *O Father-god,*
Source of the god my father, from thine hand
Send me what end seems good now in thy sight,
But death from mine to this man; and the word
 Quick on his lips yet like a blast or fire
 Blew them together; and round its lords that met
 Paused all the reeling battle: two main waves
 Meeting, one hurled sheer from the sea-wall back

<p>That shocks it sideways, one right in from sea Charging, that full in face takes at one blow That whole recoil and ruin, with less fear Startle men's eyes late shipwrecked; for a breath Crest fronting crest hung, wave to wave rose poised, Then clashed, breaker to breaker; cloud with cloud In heaven, chariot with chariot closed on earth, One fourfold flash and thunder; yet a breath, And with the king's spear through his red heart's root Driven, like a rock split from its hill- side, fell Hurled under his own horsehoofs dead on earth The sea-beast that made war on earth from sea, Dumb, with no shrill note left of storm- ing song, Eumolpus; and his whole host with one stroke Spear-stricken through its dense deep iron heart Fell hurtling from us, and in fierce re- coil Drew seaward as with one wide wail of waves, Resorbed with reluctance; such a groan Rose from the fluctuant reflue of its ranks, Sucked sullen back and strengthless; but scarce yet The steeds had sprung, and wheels had bruised their lord Fallen, when from highest height of the sundering heaven The Father for his brother's son's sake slain Sent a sheer shaft of lightning writhen, and smote Right on his son's son's forehead, that unhelmed Shone like the star that shines down storm, and gave Light to men's eyes that saw thy lord their king</p>	<p>Stand, and take breath from battle; then too soon Saw sink down as a sunset in sea-mist The high bright head that here in van of the earth Rose like a headland, and through storm and night Took all the sea's wrath on it; and now dead They bring thee back by war-forsaken ways The strength called once thy husband, the great guard That was of all men, stay of all men's lives. They bear him slain of no man, but a god, Godlike; and toward him dead the city's gates Fling their arms open mother-like, through him Saved; and the whole clear land is purged of war. What wilt thou say now of this weal and woe? <i>Praxithea.</i> I praise the gods for Athens. O sweet Earth, Mother, what joy thy soul has of thy son, Thy life of my dead lord, mine own soul knows That knows thee godlike; and what grief should mine, What sorrow should my heart have, who behold Thee made so heaven-like happy, This alone I only of all these blessed, all thy kind, Crave this for blessing to me, that in theirs Have but a part thus bitter; give me too Death, and the sight of eyes that meet not mine. And thee too from no godless heart or tongue Reproachful, thee too by thy living name, Father divine, merciful god, I call, Spring of my life-springs, fountain of my stream, Pure and poured forth to one great end with thine.</p>
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Sweet head sublime of triumph and
 these tears,
 Cephissus, if thou seest as gladly shed
 Thy blood in mine as thine own waves
 are given
 To do this great land good, to give for
 love
 The same lips drink, and comfort the
 same hearts,
 Do thou then, O my father, white-
 souled god,
 To thy most pure earth-hallowing heart
 eterne
 Take what thou gavest to be given for
 these,
 Take thy child to thee; for her time is
 full,
 For all she hath borne she hath given,
 seen all she had
 Flow from her, from her eyes and
 breasts and hands
 Flow forth to feed this people; but be
 thou,
 Dear god and gracious to all souls
 alive,
 Good to thine own seed also; let me
 sleep,
 Father; my sleepless darkling day is
 done,
 My day of life like night, but slumber-
 less:
 For all my fresh fair springs, and his
 that ran
 In one stream's bed with mine, are all
 run out
 Into the deep of death. The gods
 have saved
 Athens; my blood has bought her at
 their hand,
 And ye sit safe; be glorious and be
 glad
 As now for all time always, country-
 men,
 And love my dead forever; but me,
 me,
 What shall man give for these so good
 as death?

Chorus. From the cup of my heart I
 pour through my lips along
 The mingled wine of a joyful and sor-
 rowful song;
 Wine sweeter than honey and bitterer
 than blood that is poured

From the chalice of gold, from the
 point of the two-edged sword.
 For the city redeemed should joy flow
 forth as a flood,
 And a dirge make moan for the city
 polluted with blood.
 Great praise should the gods have
 surely, my country, of thee,
 Were thy brow but as white as of old
 for thy sons to see,
 Were thy hands as bloodless, as blame-
 less thy cheek divine;
 But a stain on it stands of the life-blood
 offered for thine.
 What thanks shall we give that are
 mixed not and marred with
 dread
 For the price that has ransomed thine
 own with thine own child's head?
 For a taint there cleaves to the peo-
 ple redeemed with blood,
 And a plague to the blood-red
 hand.
 The rain shall not cleanse it, the dew
 nor the sacred flood
 That blesses the glad live land.
 In the darkness of earth beneath, in
 the world without sun,
 The shadows of past things reign;
 And a cry goes up from the ghost of
 an ill deed done,
 And a curse for a virgin slain.
Athena. Hear, men that mourn, and
 woman without mate,
 Harken; ye sick of soul with fear,
 and thou
 Dumb-stricken for thy children; hear
 ye too,
 Earth, and the glory of heaven, and
 winds of the air,
 And the most holy heart of the deep
 sea,
 Late wroth, now full of quiet; hear
 thou, sun,
 Rolled round with the upper fire of
 rolling heaven,
 And all the stars returning; hills and
 streams,
 Springs and fresh fountains, day that
 seest these deeds,
 Night that shalt hide not; and thou
 child of mine,
 Child of a maiden, by a maid redeemed,

Blood-guiltless, though bought back
 with innocent blood,
 City mine own: I Pallas bring thee
 word,
 I virgin daughter of the most high god
 Give all you charge, and lay command
 on all,
 The word I bring be wasted not; for
 this
 The gods have stablished, and his soul
 hath sworn,
 That time nor earth nor changing sons
 of man,
 Nor waves of generations, nor the
 winds
 Of ages risen and fallen that steer their
 tides
 Through light and dark of birth and
 lovelier death
 From storm toward haven inviolable,
 shall see
 So great a light alive beneath the sun
 As the aweless eye of Athens; all fame
 else
 Shall be to her fame as a shadow in
 sleep
 To this wide noon at waking; men
 most praised
 In lands most happy for their children
 found
 Shall hold as highest honors given of
 God
 To be but likened to the least of thine,
 Thy least of all, my city; thine shall
 be
 The crown of all songs sung, of all
 deeds done
 Thine the full flower for all time; in
 thine hand
 Shall time be like a sceptre, and thine
 head
 Wear worship for a garland; nor one
 leaf
 Shall change or winter cast out of thy
 crown
 Till all flowers wither in the world;
 thine eyes
 Shall first in man's flash lightning lib-
 erty,
 Thy tongue shall first say freedom;
 thy first hand
 Shall loose the thunder terror as a
 hound

To hunt from sunset to the springs of
 the sun
 Kings that rose up out of the populous
 east
 To make their quarry of thee, and shall
 strew
 With multitudinous limbs of myriad
 herds
 The foodless pastures of the sea, and
 make
 With wrecks immeasurable and un-
 summed defeat
 One ruin of all their many-folded flocks
 Ill shepherded from Asia; by thy side
 Shall fight thy son the north wind, and
 the sea
 That was thine enemy shall be sworn
 thy friend
 And hand be struck in hand of his and
 thine
 To hold faith fast for aye; with thee,
 though each
 Make war on other, wind and sea shall
 keep
 Peace, and take truce as brethren for
 thy sake
 Leagued with one spirit and single-
 hearted strength
 To break thy foes in pieces, who shall
 meet
 The wind's whole soul and might of one
 main sea
 Full in their face of battle, and become
 A laughter to thee; like a shower of
 leaves
 Shall their long galleys, rank by stagger-
 ing rank,
 Be dashed adrift on ruin, and in thy
 sight
 The sea deride them, and that lord of
 the air
 Who took by violent hand thy child to
 wife
 With his loud lips bemoek them, by his
 breath
 Swept out of sight of being; so great
 a grace
 Shall this day give thee, that makes one
 in heart
 With mine the deep sea's godhead, and
 his son
 With him that was thine helmsman,
 king with king,

Dead man with dead; such only names
 as these
 Shalt thou call royal, take none else or
 less
 To hold of men in honor; but with me
 Shall these be worshipped as one god,
 and mix
 With mine the might of their mysterious
 names
 In one same shrine served singly, thence
 to keep
 Perpetual guard on Athens; time and
 change,
 Masters and lords of all men, shall be
 made
 To thee that knowest no master and no
 lord
 Servants; the days that lighten heaven,
 and nights
 That darken, shall be ministers of thine
 To attend upon thy glory, the great
 years
 As light-engraven letters of thy name
 Writ by the sun's hand on the front of
 the earth
 For world-beholden witness; such a
 gift
 For one fair chaplet of three lives en-
 wreathed
 To hang forever from thy storied shrine,
 And this thy steersman fallen with tiller
 in hand
 To stand forever at thy ship's helm seen,
 Shall he that bade their threefold flower
 be shorn
 And laid him low that planted, give
 thee back
 In sign of sweet land reconciled with
 sea
 And heavenlike earth with heaven:
 such promise-pledge
 I daughter without mother born of God
 To the most woful mother born of man
 Plight for continual comfort. Hail, and
 live

Beyond all human hap of mortal doom
 Happy; for so my sire hath sworn and
 I.

Praxithea. O queen Athena! from a
 heart made whole

Take as thou givest us blessing; never
 tear

Shall stain for shame, nor groan untune
 the song

That as a bird shall spread and fold its
 wings

Here in thy praise forever, and fulfil
 The whole world's crowning city

crowned with thee
 As the sun's eye fulfils and crowns with
 sight

The circling crown of heaven. There
 is no grief

Great as the joy to be made one in will
 With him that is the heart and rule of
 life,

And thee, god born of god; thy name
 is ours,

And thy large grace more great than
 our desire.

Chorus. From the depth of the
 springs of my spirit a fountain

is poured of thanksgiving,
 My country, my mother, for thee,

That thy dead for their death shall have
 life in thy sight and a name ever-

living
 At heart of thy people to be.

In the darkness of change on the waters
 of time they shall turn from afar

To the beam of this dawn for a beacon,
 the light of these pyres for a star.

They shall see thee who love and take
 comfort, who hate thee shall see

and take warning,
 Our mother that makest us free;

And the sons of thine earth shall have
 help of the waves that made war

on their morning,
 And friendship and fame of the sea.

CHASTELARD: A TRAGEDY.

DEDICATE THIS PLAY, AS A PARTIAL EXPRESSION OF REVERENCE AND GRATITUDE, TO THE CHIEF OF LIVING POETS; TO THE FIRST DRAMATIST OF HIS AGE; TO THE GREATEST EXILE, AND THEREFORE TO THE GREATEST MAN OF FRANCE; TO VICTOR HUGO.

PERSONS.

MARY STUART.	MARY HAMILTON.	RANDOLPH.
MARY BEATON.	PIERRE DE BOSCOSEL DE CHASTELARD.	MORTON.
MARY SEYTON.	DARNLEY.	LINDSAY.
MARY CARMICHAEL.	MURRAY.	FATHER BLACK.

Guards, Burgesses, a Preacher, Citizens, etc.

Another Yle is there toward the Northe, in the See Occean, where that ben fulle cruele and ful vele Wommen of Nature: and thei han precious Stones in hire Eyen; and thei ben of that kynde, hat zif they beholden ony man, thei slen him anon with the beheldyng, as dothe the Basilisk.

MAUNDEVILE'S *Voiage and Travaile*, Ch. xxviii.

ACT I. MARY BEATON.

SCENE I.—*The Upper Chamber in Holyrood.*

The four MARIES.

Mary Beaton (sings):—

1.

*Le navire
Est à l'eau ;
Entends rire
Ce gros flot
Que fait luire
Et bruire
Le vieux sire
Aquila.*

2.

*Dans l'espace
Du grand air
Le vent passe
Comme un fer*

*Siffle et sonne,
Tombe et tonne,
Prend et donne
À la mer.*

3.

*Vois, la brise
Tourne au nord,
Et la bise
Souffle et mord
Sur ta pure
Chevelure
Qui murmure
Et se tord.*

Mary Hamilton. You never sing now,
but it makes you sad;

Why do you sing?

Mary Beaton. I hardly know well
why;

It makes me sad to sing, and very sad
To hold my peace.

Mary Carmichael. I know what saddens you.

Mary Beaton. Prithee, what? what?

Mary Carmichael. Why, since we came from France.

You have no lover to make stuff for songs.

Mary Beaton. You are wise; for there my pain begins indeed,

Because I have no lovers out of France.

Mary Seyton. I mind me of one Olivier de Pesme,

(You knew him, sweet) a pale man with short hair,

Wore tied at sleeve the Beaton color.

Mary Carmichael. Blue —
I know, blue scarfs. I never liked that knight.

Mary Hamilton. Me? I know him? I hardly knew his name.

Black, was his hair? no, brown.

Mary Seyton. Light pleases you:
I have seen the time brown served you well enough.

Mary Carmichael. Lord Darnley's is a mere maid's yellow.

Mary Hamilton. No;
A man's, good color.

Mary Seyton. Ah, does that burn your blood?

Why, what a bitter color is this red
That fills your face! if you be not in love,

I am no maiden.

Mary Hamilton. Nay, God help true hearts!

I must be stabbed with love then, to the bone,

Yea, to the spirit, past cure.

Mary Seyton. What were you saying?
I see some jest run up and down your lips.

Mary Carmichael. Finish your song;
I know you have more of it;

Good sweet, I pray you do.

Mary Beaton. I am too sad.

Mary Carmichael. This will not sadden you to sing; your song
Tastes sharp of sea and the sea's bitterness,

But small pain sticks on it.

Mary Beaton. Nay, it is sad;
For either sorrow with the beaten lips

Sings not at all, or if it does get breath
Sings quick and sharp like a hard sort of mirth:

And so this song does; or I would it did,
That it might please me better than it does.

Mary Seyton. Well, as you choose then. What a sort of men
Crowd all about the squares!

Mary Carmichael. Ay, hateful men;
For look how many talking mouths be there,

So many angers show their teeth at us.
Which one is that, stooped somewhat in the neck,

That walks so with his chin against the wind,

Lips sideways shut? a keen-faced man — lo there,

He that walks midmost.

Mary Seyton. That is Master Knox.
He carries all these folk within his skin,
Bound up as 'twere between the brows of him

Like a bad thought; their hearts beat inside his;

They gather at his lips like flies in the sun,

Thrust sides to catch his face.

Mary Carmichael. Look forth; so — push

The window — further — see you any thing?

Mary Hamilton. They are well gone;
but pull the lattice in,
The wind is like a blade aslant. Would God

I could get back one day I think upon;
The day we four and some six after us
Sat in that Louvre garden and plucked fruits

To cast love-lots with in the gathered grapes;

This way: you shut your eyes, and reach and pluck,

And catch a lover for each grape you get.

I got but one, a green one, and it broke
Between my fingers, and it ran down through them.

Mary Seyton. Ay, and the queen fell in a little wrath

Because she got so many, and tore off

Some of them she had plucked unwittingly —

She said, against her will. What fell to you?

Mary Beaton. Me? nothing but the stalk of a stripped bunch

With clammy grape-juice leavings at the tip.

Mary Carmichael. Ay, true, the queen came first, and she won all;

It was her bunch we took to cheat you with.

What, will you weep for that now? for you seem

As one that means to weep. God pardon me!

I think your throat is choking up with tears.

You are not well, sweet, for a lying jest To shake you thus much.

Mary Beaton. I am well enough:

Give not your pity trouble for my sake.

Mary Seyton. If you be well, sing out your song and laugh,

Though it were but to fret the fellows there. —

Now shall we catch her secret washed and wet

In the middle of her song; for she must weep

If she sing through.

Mary Hamilton. I told you it was love;

I watched her eyes all through the masquing time

Feed on his face by morse's; she must weep.

Mary Beaton (sings): —

4.

Le navire

Passe et fuit,

Puis chavire

À grand bruit;

Et sur l'onde

La plus blonde

Tête au monde

Flotte et fuit.

5.

Moi, je rame,

Et l'amour

*C'est ma flamme,
Mon grand jour,
Ma chandelle
Blanche et belle,
Ma chapelle
De séjour.*

6.

*Toi, mon âme
Et ma foi,
Sois ma dame
Et ma loi;
Sois ma mie,
Sois Marie,
Sois ma vie,
Toute à moi!*

Mary Seyton. I know the song; a song of Chastelard's
He made in coming over with the queen.
How hard it rained! he played that over twice,

Sitting before her, singing each word soft,

As if he loved the least she listened to
Mary Hamilton. No marvel if he loved it for her sake;

She is the choice of women in the world.
Is she not, sweet?

Mary Beaton. I have seen no fairer one.

Mary Seyton. And the most loving:
did you note last night
How long she held him with her hands and eyes,

Looking a little sadly, and at last
Kissed him below the chin, and parted so
As the dance ended?

Mary Hamilton. This was courtesy;
So might I kiss my singing-bird's red bill
After some song, till he bit short my lip.

Mary Seyton. But if a lady hold her bird anights
To sing to her between her fingers — ha?
I have seen such birds.

Mary Carmichael. Oh, you talk emptily;
She is full of grace; and marriage in good time

Will wash the fool called scandal off men's lips.

Mary Hamilton. I know not that; I know how folk would gibe

If one of us pushed courtesy so far.
 She has always loved love's fashions
 well; you wot,
 The marshal, head friend of this Chaste-
 lard's,
 She used to talk with ere he brought
 her here,
 And sow their talk with little kisses
 thick
 As roses in rose-harvest. For myself,
 I cannot see which side of her that
 lurks
 Which snares in such wise all the sense
 of men;
 What special beauty, subtle as man's
 eye
 And tender as the inside of the eyelid is,
 There grows about her.

Mary Carmichael. I think her cun-
 ning speech —
 The soft and rapid shudder of her
 breath
 In talking—the rare, tender little
 laugh—
 The pitiful sweet sound like a bird's
 sigh
 When her voice breaks; her talking
 does it all.

Mary Seyton. I say, her eyes with
 those clear perfect brows:
 It is the playing of those eyelashes,
 The lure of anorous looks as sad as
 love,
 Plucks all souls toward her like a net.

Mary Hamilton. What, what!
 You praise her in too lover-like a wise
 For women that praise women; such
 report
 Is like robes worn the rough side next
 the skin,
 Frets where it warms.

Mary Seyton. You think too much in
 French.

Enter DARNLEY.

Here comes your thorn; what glove
 against it now?

Mary Hamilton. Oh, God's good pity!
 this a thorn of mine?

It has not run deep in yet.

Mary Carmichael. I am not sure:

The red runs over to your face's edge.

Darnley. Give me one word; nay,
 ladly, for love's sake;

Here, come this way; I will not keep
 you; no.

— O my sweet soul, why do you wrong
 me thus?

Mary Hamilton. Why will you give
 me for men's eyes to burn?

Darnley. What, sweet, I love you as
 mine own soul loves me;

They shall divide when we do.

Mary Hamilton. I cannot say.

Darnley. Why, look you, I am broken
 with the queen;

This is the rancor and the bitter heart
 That grows in you, by God it is naught
 else.

Why, this last night she held me for a
 fool—

Ay, God wot, for a thing of stripe and
 bell.

I bade her make me marshal in her
 masque—

I had the dress here painted, gold and
 gray

(That is, not gray, but a blue green like
 this)—

She tells me she had chosen her mar-
 shal, she,

The best o' the world for cunning and
 sweet wit;

And what sweet fool but her sweet
 knight, God help!

To serve her with that three-inch wit of
 his?

She is all fool and fiddling now: for
 me,

I am well pleased; God knows, if I
 might choose

I would not be more troubled with her
 love.

Her love is like a brier that rasps the
 flesh,

And yours is soft like flowers. Come
 this way, love;

So, further in this window: hark you
 here.

Enter CHASTELARD.

Mary Beaton. Good morrow, sir.

Chastelard. Good morrow, noble lady.

Mary Carmichael. You have heard
 no news? what news?

Chastelard. Nay, I have none.

That maiden-tongued male-faced Eliza
 beth

Hath eyes unlike our queen's, hair not
so soft,
And hands more sudden save for court-
esy;
And lips no kiss of love's could bring
to flower
In such red wise as our queen's; save
this news,
I know none English.

Mary Seyton. Come, no news of her;
For God's love talk still rather of our
queen.

Mary Beaton. God give us grace then
to speak well of her.
You did right joyfully in our masque
last night;

I saw you when the queen lost breath
(her head

Bent back, her chin and lips catching
the air —

A goodly thing to see her) how you
smiled

Across her head, between your lips —
no doubt

You had great joy, sir. Did not you
take note

Once how one lock fell? that was good
to see.

Chastelard. Yea, good enough to live
for.

Mary Beaton. Nay, but sweet
Enough to die. When she broke off
the dance,

Turning round short and soft — I never
saw

Such supple ways of walking as she has.

Chastelard. Why do you praise her
gracious looks to me?

Mary Beaton. Sir, for mere sport;
but tell me even for love

How much you love her.

Chastelard. I know not: it may be
If I had set mine eyes to find that out,
I should not know it. She hath fair
eyes: may be

I love her for sweet eyes or brows or
hair,

For the smooth temples, where God
touching her

Made blue with sweeter veins the flower-
sweet white;

Or for the tender turning of her wrist,
Or marriage of the eyelid with the cheek;

I cannot tell; or flush of lifting throat,
I know not if the color get a name
This side of heaven — no man knows;
or her mouth,

A flower's lip with a snake's lip, sting-
ing sweet,

And sweet to sting with: face that one
would see

And then fall blind and die with sight
of it

Held fast between the eyelids — oh, all
these

And all her body and the soul to that,
The speech and shape and hand and
foot and heart

That I would die of — yea, her name
that turns

My face to fire being written — I know
no whit

How much I love them.

Mary Beaton. Nor how she loves you
back?

Chastelard. I know her ways of lov-
ing, all of them:

A sweet soft way the first is; afterward
It burns and bites like fire; the end of
that,

Charred dust, and eyelids bitten through
with smoke.

Mary Beaton. What has she done for
you to gird at her?

Chastelard. Nothing. You do not
greatly love her, you,

Who do not — gird, you call it. I am
bound to France;

Shall I take word from you to any one?
So it be harmless, not a gird, I will.

Mary Beaton. I doubt you will not
go hence with your life.

Chastelard. Why, who should slay
me? no man northwards born,
In my poor mind; my sword's lip is no
maid's

To fear the iron biting of their own,
Though they kiss hard for hate's sake.

Mary Beaton. Lo you, sir,
How sharp he whispers, what close
breath and eyes —

And hers are fast upon him, do you see?

Chastelard. Well, which of these must
take my life in hand?

Pray God it be the better: nay, which
hand?

Mary Beaton. I think, none such.
The man is goodly made;
She is tender-hearted toward his courtesies,

And would not have them fall too low to find.

Look, they slip forth.

[*Exeunt* DARNLEY and MARY HAMILTON

Mary Seyton. For love's sake, after them,

And soft as love can.

[*Exeunt* MARY CARMICHAEL and MARY SEYTON.

Chastelard. True, a goodly man.
What shapeliness and state he hath,
what eyes,

Brave brow and lordly lip! were it not fit
Great queens should love him?

Mary Beaton. See you now, fair lord,
I have but scant breath's time to help myself,

And I must cast my heart out on a chance;

So bear with me. That we twain have
loved well,

I have no heart nor wit to say; God wot
We had never made good lovers, you
and I.

Look you, I would not have you love
me, sir,

For all the love's sake in the world. I
say,

You love the queen, and loving burns
you up,

And mars the grace and joyous wit you
had,

Turning your speech to sad, your face
to strange,

Your mirth to nothing: and I am piteous,
I,

Even as the queen is, and such women
are;

And if I helped you to your love-longing,

Meseems some grain of love might fall
my way,

And love's god help me when I came
to love:

I have read tales of men that won their
loves

On some such wise.

Chastelard. If you mean mercifully,

I am bound to you past thought and
thank; if worse,
I will but thank your lips and not your
heart.

Mary Beaton. Nay, let love wait, and
praise me, in God's name,
Some day when he shall find me; yet,
God wot,

My lips are of one color with my heart.
Withdraw now from me, and about mid-
night

In some close chamber without light or
noise

It may be I shall get you speech of her;
She loves you well; it may be she will
speak,

I wot not what; she loves you at her
heart.

Let her not see that I have given you
word,

Lest she take shame and hate her love.
Till night.

Let her not see it.

Chastelard. I will not thank you now,
And then I'll die what sort of death
you will.

Farewell. [*Exit.*

Mary Beaton. And by God's mercy
and my love's

I will find ways to earn such thank of
you. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. — *A Hall in the same.*

The QUEEN, DARNLEY, MURRAY, RANDOLPH, the MARIES, CHASTELARD, etc.

Queen. Hath no man seen my lord of
Chastelard?

Nay, no great matter. Keep you on
that side:

Begin the purpose.

Mary Carmichael. Madam, he is here.

Queen. Begin a measure now that
other side.

I will not dance; let them play soft a
little.

Fair sir, we had a dance to tread to-
night,

To teach our north folk all sweet ways
of France;

But at this time we have no heart to it

Sit, sir, and talk. Look, this breast-clasp is new,

The French king sent it me.

Chastelard. A goodly thing:

But what device? the word is ill to catch.

Queen. A Venus crowned, that eats the hearts of men:

Below her flies a love with a bat's wings,
And strings the hair of paramours to bind

Live birds' feet with. Lo what small subtle work:

The smith's name, Gian Crisostomo da — what?

Can you read that? The sea froths underfoot;

She stands upon the sea, and it curls up
In soft loose curls that run to one in the wind.

But her hair is not shaken, there's a fault;

It lies straight down in close-cut points
and tongues,

Not like blown hair. The legend is writ small:

Still one makes out this — *Cave* — if you look.

Chastelard. I see the Venus well enough, God wot,

But nothing of the legend.

Queen. Come, fair lord,
Shall we dance now? my heart is good again. [*They dance a measure.*]

Darnley. I do not like this manner of a dance,

This game of two by two; it were much better

To meet between the changes and to mix

Than still to keep apart and whispering
Each lady out of earshot with her friend.

Mary Beaton. That's as the lady serves her knight, I think:

We are broken up too much.

Darnley. Nay, no such thing;
Be not wroth, lady, I wot it was the queen

Pricked each his friend out. Look you now — your ear —

If love had gone by choosing — how they laugh,

Lean lips together, and wring hands underhand!

What, you look white too, sick of heart,
ashamed,

No marvel — for men call it — hark you though — [*They pass.*]

Murray. Was the Queen found no merrier in France?

Mary Hamilton. Why, have you seen her sorrowful to-night?

Murray. I say not so much; blithe she seems at whiles,

Gentle and goodly doubtless in all ways,
But hardly with such lightness and quick heart

As it was said.

Mary Hamilton. 'Tis your great care of her

Makes you misdoubt; naught else.

Murray. Yea, may be so;

She has no cause I know to sadden her. [*They pass.*]

Queen. I am tired too soon; I could have danced down hours

Two years gone hence, and felt no wearier.

One grows much older northwards, my fair lord;

I wonder men die south; meseems all France

Smells sweet with living, and bright breath of days

That keep men far from dying. Peace; pray you now,

No dancing more. Sing, sweet, and make us mirth;

We have done with dancing measures: sing that song

You call the song of love at ebb.

Mary Beaton (sings).

1.

*Between the sunset and the sea
My love laid hands and lips on me;
Of sweet came sour, of day came night,
Of long desire came brief delight:
Ah, love, and what thing came of thee
Between the sea-downs and the sea?*

2.

*Between the sea-mark and the sea
Joy grew to grief, grief grew to me;
Love turned to tears, and tears to fire,
And dead delight to new desire;*

*Love's talk, love's touch there seemed to be
Between the sea-sand and the sea.*

3.

*Between the sundown and the sea
Love watched one hour of love with me ;
Then down the all-golden water-ways
His feet flew after yesterdays ;
I saw them come and saw them flee
Between the sea-foam and the sea.*

4.

*Between the sea-strand and the sea
Love fell on sleep, sleep fell on me ;
The first star saw twain turn to one
Between the moonrise and the sun ;
The next, that saw not love, saw me
Between the sea-banks and the sea.*

Queen. Lo, sirs,
What mirth is here! Some song of
yours, fair lord;
You know glad ways of rhyming — no
such tunes
As go to tears.

Chastelard. I made this yesterday;
For its love's sake I pray you let it
live. [He sings.

1.

*Après tant de jours, après tant de pleurs,
Soyez secourable à mon âme en peine.
Voyez comme Avril fait l'amour aux
fleurs;
Dame d'amour, dame aux belles cou-
leurs,
Dieu vous a fait belle, Amour vous fait
reine.*

2.

*Rions, je l'en prie ; aimons, je le veux.
Le temps fuit et rit et ne revient guère.
Pour baiser le bout de tes blonds cheveux,
Pour baiser tes cils, ta bouche et tes yeux ;
L'amour n'a qu'un jour auprès de sa
mère.*

Queen. 'Tis a true song; love shall
not pluck time back,
Nor time lie down with love. For me,
I am old;

Have you no hair changed since you
changed to Scot?

I look each day to see my face drawn
up

About the eyes, as if they sucked the
cheeks.

I think this air and face of things here
north

Puts snow at flower-time in the blood,
and tears

Between the sad eyes and the merry
mouth

In their youth-days.

Chastelard. It is a bitter air.

Queen. Faith, if I might be gone, sir,
would I stay?

I think, for no man's love's sake.

Chastelard. I think not.

Queen. Do you not mind at landing
how the quay

Looked like a blind wet face in waste
of wind

And washing of wan waves? how the
hard mist

Made the hills ache? Your songs lied
loud, my knight:

They said my face would burn off cloud
and rain

Seen once, and fill the crannied land
with fire,

Kindle the capes in their blind black-
gray hoods —

I know not what. You praise me past
all loves;

And these men love me little; 'tis some
fault,

I think, to love me: even a fool's sweet
fault.

I have your verse still beating in my
head,

Of how the swallow got a wing broken
In the springtime, and lay upon his
side

Watching the rest fly off i' the red leaf-
time,

And broke his heart with grieving at
himself

Before the snow came. Do you know
that lord

With sharp-set eyes? and him with
huge thewed throat?

Good friends to me; I had need love
them well.

Why do you look one way? I will not have you

Keep your eyes here: 'tis no great wit in me

To care much now for old French friends of mine. —

Come, a fresh measure; come, play well for me,

Fair sirs, your playing puts life in foot and heart. —

Darnley. Lo you again, sirs, how she laughs and leans,

Holding him fast — the supple way she hath!

Your queen hath none such; better as she is

For all her measures, a grave English maid,

Than queen of snakes and Scots.

Randolph. She is over-fair

To be so sweet, and hurt not. A good knight;

Goodly to look on.

Murray. Yea, a good sword too,

And of good kin; too light of loving though;

These jangling song-smiths are keen love-mongers,

They snap at all meats.

Darnley. What! by God I think,

For all his soft French face and bright boy's sword,

There be folks fairer: and for knightliness,

These hot-lipped brawls of Paris breed sweet knights, —

Mere stabbers for a laugh across the wine. —

Queen. There, I have danced you down for once, fair lord;

You look pale now. Nay then for courtesy

I must needs help you; do not bow your head,

I am tall enough to reach close under it.

[*Kisses him.*]

Now come, we'll sit and see this passage through. —

Darnley. A courtesy, God help us! courtesy —

Pray God it wound not where it should heal wounds.

Why, there was here last year some lord of France

(Priest on the wrong side as some folk are prince)

Told tales of Paris ladies — nay, by God,

No jest for queen's lips to catch laughter of

That would keep clean; I wot he made good mirth,

But she laughed over sweetly, and in such wise —

Nay, I laughed too, but lothly. —

Queen. How they look!

The least thing courteous galls them to the bone.

What would one say now I were thinking of?

Chastelard. It seems, some sweet thing.

Queen. True, a sweet one, sir, —

That madrigal you made Alys de Saulx Of the three ways of love; the first kiss

honor,

The second pity, and the last kiss love. Which think you now was that I kissed

you with?

Chastelard. It should be pity, if you be pitiful:

For I am past all honoring that keep Outside the eye of battle, where my

kin

Fallen overseas have found this many a day

No helm of mine between them; and for love,

I think of that as dead men of good days

Ere the wrong side of death was theirs, when God

Was friends with them.

Queen. Good; call it pity, then.

You have a subtle riddling skill at love Which is not like a lover. For my

part,

I am resolved to be well done with love,

Though I were fairer-faced than all the world;

As there be fairer. Think you, fair my knight,

Love shall live after life in any man?

I have given you stuff for riddles.

Chastelard. Most sweet queen,
 They say men dying remember, with
 sharp joy
 And rapid reluctance of desire,
 Some old thing, some swift breath of
 wind, some word,
 Some sword-stroke or dead lute-strain,
 some lost sight,
 Some sea-blossom stripped to the sun
 and burned
 At naked ebb—some river-flower that
 breathes
 Against the stream like a swooned
 swimmer's mouth—
 Some tear or laugh ere lip and eye were
 man's—
 Sweet stings that struck the blood in
 riding—nay,
 Some garment or sky-color or spice-
 smell,
 And die with heart and face shut fast
 on it,
 And know not why, and weep not: it
 may be
 Men shall hold love fast always in such
 wise
 In new fair lives where all are new
 things else,
 And know not why, and weep not.

Queen. A right rhyme,
 And right a rhyme's worth: nay, a
 sweet song, though.
 What! shall my cousin hold fast that
 love of his,
 Her face and talk, when life ends? as
 God grant
 His life end late and sweet! I love him
 well.
 She is fair enough, his lover; a fair-
 faced maid,
 With gray sweet eyes and tender touch
 of talk;
 And that, God wot, I wist not. See
 you, sir,
 Men say I needs must get wed hasti-
 ly;
 Do none point lips at him?

Chastelard. Yea, guessingly.

Queen. God help such lips! and get
 me leave to laugh!

What should I do but paint and put
 him up.
 Like a gilt god, a saintship in a shrine,

For all fools' feast? God's mercy on
 men's wits!
 Tall as a housetop and as bare of
 brain—
 I'll have no staffs with fool-faced carven
 heads
 To hang my life on. Nay, for love, no
 more,
 For fear I laugh and set their eyes on
 edge
 To find out why I laugh. Good night,
 fair lords;
 Bid them cease playing. Give me your
 hand; good night.

SCENE III.—MARY BEATON'S *Cham-
 ber: night.*

Enter CHASTELARD.

Chastelard. I am not certain yet she
 will not come;
 For I can feel her hand's heat still in
 mine,
 Past doubting of, and see her brows
 half drawn,
 And half a light in the eyes. If she
 come not,
 I am no worse than he that dies to-
 night.
 This two years' patience gets an end at
 least,
 Whichever way I am well done with it.
 How hard the thin sweet moon is, split
 and laced
 And latticed over, just a stray of it
 Catching and clinging at a strip of wall,
 Hardly a hand's-breadth. Did she turn
 indeed
 In going out? not to catch up her gown
 The page let slip, but to keep sight of
 me?
 There was a soft small stir beneath her
 eyes
 Hard to put on, a quivering of her
 blood
 That knew of the old nights watched
 out wakefully.
 Those measures of her dancing too
 were changed—
 More swift and with more eager stops
 at whiles
 And rapid pauses where breath failed
 her lips.

Enter MARY BEATON.

Oh, she is come: if you be she indeed,
Let me but hold your hand; what! no
word yet?

You turn and kiss me without word; O
sweet!

If you will slay me, be not over-quick,
Kill me with some slow heavy kiss that
plucks

The heart out at the lips. Alas! sweet
love,

Give me some old sweet word to kiss
away.

Is it a jest? for I can feel your hair
Touch me—I may embrace your body
too?

I know you well enough without sweet
words.

How should one make you speak? This
is not she.

Come in the light; nay, let me see your
eyes.

Ah, you it is? what have I done to you?
And do you look now to be slain for this
That you twist back and shudder like
one stabbed?

Mary Beaton. Yea, kill me now, and
do not look at me:

God knows I meant to die. Sir, for
God's love,

Kill me now quick ere I go mad with
shame!

Chastelard. Cling not upon my wrists:
let go the hilt:

Nay, you will bruise your hand with it.
Stand up;

You shall not have my sword forth.

Mary Beaton. Kill me now,
I will not rise: there, I am patient, see.
I will not strive, but kill me for God's
sake.

Chastelard. Pray you, rise up, and be
not shaken so:

Forgive me my rash words, my heart
was gone

After the thing you were: be not
ashamed;

Give me the shame, you have no part
in it;

Can I not say a word shall do you good?
Forgive that too.

Mary Beaton. I shall run crazed with
shame.

But when I felt your lips catch hold on
mine,

It stopped my breath: I would have
told you all.

Let me go out; you see I lied to you,
And I am shamed; I pray you, loose
me, sir,

Let me go out.

Chastelard. Think no base things of
me:

I were most base to let you go ashamed.
Think my heart's love and honor go
with you:

Yea, while I live, for your love's noble
sake,

I am your servant in what wise may be,
To love and serve you with right thank-
ful heart.

Mary Beaton. I have given men leave
to mock me, and must bear

What shame they please: you have
good cause to mock.

Let me pass now.

Chastelard. You know I mock you
not.

If ever I leave off to honor you,
God give me shame! I were the worst
churl born.

Mary Beaton. No marvel though the
queen should love you too,

Being such a knight. I pray you for
her love,

Lord Chastelard, of your great courtesy,
Think now no scorn to give me my last
kiss

That I shall have of man before I die.
Even the same lips you kissed and knew
not of

Will you kiss now, knowing the shame
of them,

And say no one word to me afterwards,
That I may see I have loved the best
lover

And man most courteous of all men
alive?

Mary Seyton (within). Here, fetch
the light: nay, this way; enter
all.

Mary Beaton. I am twice undone
Fly, get some hiding, sir;

They have spied upon me somehow.

Chastelard. Nay, fear not;
Stand by my side.

Enter MARY SEYTON and MARY HAMILTON.

Mary Hamilton. Give me that light: this way.

Chastelard. What jest is here, fair ladies? it walks late, something too late for laughing.

Mary Seyton. Nay, fair sir, What jest is this of yours? Look to your lady:

She is nigh swooned. The queen shall know all this.

Mary Hamilton. A grievous shame it is we are fallen upon;
Hold forth the light. Is this your care of us?

Nay, come, look up: this is no game, God wot.

Chastelard. Shame shall befall them that speak shamefully:

I swear this lady is as pure and good

As any maiden, and who believes me not

Shall keep the shame for his part and the lie.

To them that come in honor and not in hate,

I will make answer. — Lady, have good heart.

Give me the light there: I will see you forth.

ACT II.—DARNLEY.

SCENE I.—*The great Chamber in Holyrood.*

The QUEEN and MARY SEYTON.

Queen. But will you swear it?

Mary Seyton. Swear it, madam?

Queen. Ay —

Swear it.

Mary Seyton. Madam, I am not friends with them.

Queen. Swear then against them if you are not friends.

Mary Seyton. Indeed I saw them kiss.

Queen. So lovers use —

What, their mouths close? a goodly way of love!

Or but the hands? or on her throat? Prithee —

You have sworn that.

Mary Seyton. I say what I saw done.

Queen. Ay, you did see her cheeks (God smite them red!)

Kissed either side? what, they must eat strange food,

Those singing lips of his?

Mary Seyton. Sweet meat enough — They started at my coming five yards off,

But there they were.

Queen. A maid may have kissed cheeks

And no shame in them — yet one would not swear.

You have sworn that. Pray God he be not mad:

A sickness in his eyes. The left side love

(I was told that) and the right courtesy.

'Tis good fools' fashion. What! no more but this?

For me, God knows I am no whit wroth, — not I;

But, for your fame's sake that her shame will sting,

I cannot see a way to pardon her, — For your fame's sake, lest that be prated of.

Mary Seyton. Nay, if she were not chaste — I have not said

She was not chaste.

Queen. I know you are tender of her;

And your sweet word will hardly turn her sweet.

Mary Seyton. Indeed I would fain do her any good.

Shall I not take some gracious word to her?

Queen. Bid her not come or wait on me to-day.

Mary Seyton. Will you see him?

Queen. See — oh, this Chastelard? He doth not well to sing maids into shame;

And folk are sharp here; yet for sweet friends' sake

Assuredly I'll see him. I am not wroth.

A goodly man, and a good sword
thereto —

It may be he shall wed her. I am not
wroth.

Mary Seyton. Nay, though she bore
with him, she hath no great love,
I doubt me, that way.

Queen. God mend all, I pray —
And keep us from all wrong-doing and
wild words.

I think there is no fault men fall upon
But I could pardon. Look you, I would
swear

She were no paramour for any man,
So well I love her.

Mary Seyton. Am I to bid him in?

Queen. As you will, sweet. But if
you held me hard
You did me grievous wrong. Doth he
wait there?

Men call me over-tender; I had rather
so,

Than too ungracious. — Father, what
with you?

Enter FATHER BLACK.

Father Black. God's peace and health
of soul be with the queen!

And pardon be with me though I speak
truth.

As I was going on peaceable men's
wise

Through your good town, desiring no
man harm,

A kind of shameful woman with thief's
lips

Spake somewhat to me over a thrust-
out chin,

Soliciting as I deemed an alms; which
alms

(Remembering what was writ of Mag-
dalen)

I gave not grudging but with pure good
heart,

When lo! some scurril children that
lurked near,

Set there by Satan for my stumbling-
stone,

Fell hooting with necks thwart and
eyes a-squint,

Screeched and made horns and shot
out tongues at me, —

As at my Lord the Jews shot out their
tongues,

And made their heads wag; I consid-
ering this

Took up my cross in patience, and
passed forth:

Nevertheless one ran between my feet,
And made me totter, using speech and
signs

I smart with shame to think of: then
my blood

Kindled, and I was moved to smite the
knave,

And the knave howled; whereat the
lewd whole herd

Brake forth upon me, and cast mire
and stones,

So that I ran sore risk of bruise or
gash

If they had touched; likewise I heard
men say,

(Their foul speech missed not of mine
ear) they cried,

"This devil's mass-priest hankers for
new flesh

Like a dry hound; let him seek such
at home,

Snuff and smoke out the queen's
French" —

Queen. They said that?

Father Black. "— French paramours
that breed more shames than
sons

All her court through;" forgive me.

Queen. With my heart.

Father, you see the hatefulness of
these —

They loathe us for our love. I am not
moved:

What should I do being angry? By
this hand

(Which is not big enough to bruise
their lips),

I marvel what thing should be done
with me

To make me wroth. We must have
patience with us

When we seek thank of men.

Father Black. Madam, farewell;

I pray God keep you in such patient
heart. [Exit.

Queen. Let him come now.

Mary Seyton. Madam, he is at hand.
[Exit

Enter CHASTELARD.

Queen. Give me that broidery-frame;
 how, gone so soon?
 No maid about? Reach me some skein
 of silk.
 What! are you come, fair lord? Now
 by my life
 That lives here idle, I am right glad of
 you;
 I have slept so well and sweet since
 yesternight
 It seems our dancing put me in glad
 heart.
 Did you sleep well?
Chastelard. Yea, as a man may sleep.
Queen. You smile as if I jested; do
 not men
 Sleep as we do? Had you fair dreams
 in the night?
 For me—but I should fret you with
 my dreams—
 I dreamed sweet things. You are good
 at soothsaying:
 Make me a sonnet of my dream.
Chastelard. I will,
 When I shall know it.
Queen. I thought I was asleep
 In Paris, lying by my lord, and knew
 In some wise he was well awake, and yet
 I could not wake too; and I seemed to
 know
 He hated me, and the least breath I
 made
 Would turn somehow to slay or stifle
 me.
 Then in brief time he rose and went
 away,
 Saying, *Let her dream, but when her
 dream is out*
I will come back and kill her as she wakes.
 And I lay sick and trembling with sore
 fear,
 And still I knew that I was deep asleep;
 And thinking, *I must dream now, or I
 die,*
*God send me some good dream lest I be
 slain!*
 Fell fancying one had bound my feet
 with cords,
 And bade me dance, and the first meas-
 ure made
 I fell upon my face, and wept for pain;
 And my cords broke, and I began the
 dance

To a bitter tune; and he that danced
 with me
 Was clothed in black with long red
 lines and bars,
 And masked down to the lips, but by
 the chin
 I knew you though your lips were sewn
 up close
 With scarlet thread all dabbled wet in
 blood.
 And then I knew the dream was not for
 good.
 And striving with sore travail to reach up
 And kiss you (you were taller in my
 dream)
 I missed your lips, and woke.
Chastelard. Sweet dreams, you said?
 An evil dream I hold it for, sweet love.
Queen. You call love sweet; yea, what
 is bitter, then?
 There's nothing broken sleep could hit
 upon
 So bitter as the breaking down of love.
 You call me sweet; I am not sweet to
 you,
 Nor you—O, I would say not sweet to
 me,
 And if I said so I should hardly lie.
 But there have been those things be-
 tween us, sir,
 That men call sweet.
Chastelard. I know not how *There is*
Turns to There hath been; 'tis a heavier
 change
 Than change of flesh to dust. Yet,
 though years change,
 And good things end, and evil things
 grow great,
 The old love that was, or that was
 dreamed about,
 That sang and kissed and wept upon
 itself,
 Laughed and ran mad with love of its
 own face,
 That was a sweet thing.
Queen. Nay, I know not well.
 'Tis when the man is held fast under-
 ground
 They say for sooth what manner of
 heart he had.
 We are alive, and cannot be well sure
 If we loved much or little: think you not
 It were convenient one of us should die?

Chastelard. Madam, your speech is harsh to understand.

Queen. Why, there could come no change then; one of us

Would never need to fear our love might turn

To the sad thing that it may grow to be. I would sometimes all things were dead asleep

That I have loved, all buried in soft beds

And sealed with dreams and visions, and each dawn

Sung to by sorrows, and all night assuaged

By short sweet kisses and by sweet long loves

For old life's sake, lest weeping over-much

Should wake them in a strange new time, and arm

Memory's blind hand to kill forgetfulness.

Chastelard. Look, you dream still, and sadly.

Queen. Sooth, a dream;

For such things died or lied in sweet love's face,

And I forget them not, God help my wit!

I would the whole world were made up of sleep

And life not fashioned out of lies and loves.

We foolish women have such times, you know,

When we are weary or afraid or sick For perfect nothing.

Chastelard (aside). Now would one be fain

To know what bitter or what dangerous thing

She thinks of, softly chafing her soft lip. She must mean evil.

Queen. Are you sad, too, sir,

That you say nothing?

Chastelard. I? not sad a jot—

Though this your talk might make a blithe man sad.

Queen. O me! I must not let stray sorrows out;

They are ill to fledge, and if they feel blithe air

They wail and chirp untunefully. Would God

I had been a man! when I was born, men say,

My father turned his face and wept to think

I was no man.

Chastelard. Will you weep, too?

Queen. In sooth,

If I were man I should be no base man;

I could have fought; yea, I could fight now, too,

If men would show me; I would I were the king!

I should be all ways better than I am.

Chastelard. Nay, would you have more honor, having this—

Men's hearts and loves and the sweet spoil of souls

Given you like simple gold to bind your hair?

Say you were king of thews, not queen of souls,

An iron headpiece hammered to a head, You might fail, too.

Queen. No, then I would not fail,

Or God should make me woman back again.

To be King James—you hear men say *King James,*

The word sounds like a piece of gold thrown down,

Rings with a round and royal note in it— A name to write good record of; this

king Fought here and there, was beaten such a day,

And came at last to a good end, his life Being all lived out, and for the main

part well And like a king's life; then to have men say

(As now they say of Flodden, here they broke

And there they held up to the end) years back

They saw you—*yea, I saw the king's face helmed*

Red in the hot lit foreground of some fight

Hold the whole war as it were by the bit, a horse

Fit for his knees' grip—the great rearing war

That frothed with lips flung up, and shook men's lives

Off either flank of it like snow; I saw (You could not hear as his sword rang), saw him

Shout, laugh, smite straight, and flave the riven ranks,

Move as the wind moves, and his horse's feet

Stripe their long flags with dust. Why, if one died,

To die so in the heart and heat of war
Were a much goodlier thing than living soft

And speaking sweet for fear of men.
Woe's me!

Is there no way to pluck this body off?
Then I should never fear a man again,
Even in my dreams I should not; no, by heaven.

Chastelard. I never thought you did fear any thing.

Queen. God knows I do; I could be sick with wrath

To think what grievous fear I have 'twixt whiles

Of mine own self and of base men.
Last night

If certain lords were glancing where I was

Under the eyelid, with sharp lip and brow,

I tell you, for pure shame and fear of them,

I could have gone and slain them.

Chastelard. Verily,

You are changed since those good days that fell in France;

But yet I think you are not so changed at heart

As to fear man.

Queen. I would I had no need.

Lend me your sword a little: a fair sword,

I see the fingers that I hold it with
Clear in the blade, bright pink, the shell-color,

Brighter than flesh is really, curved all round.

Now men would mock if I should wear it here,

Bound under bosom with a girdle, here,

And yet I have heart enough to wear it well.

Speak to me like a woman, let me see
If I can play at man.

Chastelard. God save King James!

Queen. Would you could change now! Fie, this will not do:

Unclasp your sword; nay, the hilt hurts my side;

It sticks fast here. Unbind this knot for me:

Stoop, and you'll see it closer; thank you: there.

Now I can breathe, sir. Ah! it hurts me, though:

This was fool's play.

Chastelard. Yea, you are better so, Without the sword; your eyes are stronger things,

Whether to save or slay.

Queen. Alas, my side!

It hurts right sorely. Is it not pitiful
Our souls should be so bound about with flesh

Even when they leap and smite with wings and feet,

The least pain plucks them back, puts out their eyes,

Turns them to tears and words? Ah, my sweet knight,

You have the better of us that weave and weep

While the blithe battle blows upon your eyes

Like rain and wind; yet I remember too

When this last year the fight at Corrichie

Reddened the rushes with stained fen-water,

I rode with my good men, and took delight,

Feeling the sweet clear wind upon my eyes,

And rainy soft smells blown upon my face

In riding. then the great fight jarred and joined,

And the sound stung me right through heart and all;

For I was here, see, gazing off the hills

In the wet air; our housings were all
 wet;
 And not a plume stood stiffly past the
 ear,
 But flapped between the bridle and the
 neck;
 And under us we saw the battle go
 Like running water; I could see by
 fits
 Some helm the rain fell shining off,
 some flag
 Snap from the staff, shorn through or
 broken short
 In the man's falling: yea, one seemed
 to catch
 The very grasp of tumbled men at
 men,
 Teeth clinched in throats, hands riveted
 in hair,
 Tearing the life out with no help of
 swords.
 And all the clamor seemed to shine,
 the light
 Seemed to shout as a man doth; twice
 I laughed —
 I tell you, twice my heart swelled out
 with thirst
 To be into the battle; see, fair lord,
 I swear it seemed I might have made a
 knight,
 And yet the simple bracing of a belt
 Makes me cry out; this is too pitiful,
 This dusty half of us made up with
 fears. —
 Have you been ever quite so glad to
 fight
 As I have thought men must? pray
 you, speak truth.
Chastelard. Yea, when the time came,
 there caught hold of me
 Such pleasure in the head and hands
 and blood
 As may be kindled under loving lips:
 Crossing the ferry once to the Clerk's
 Field,
 I mind me how the plashing noise of
 Seine
 Put fire into my face for joy, and how
 My blood kept measure with the swing-
 ing boat
 Till we touched land, all for the sake
 of that
 Which should be soon.

Queen. Her name, for God's love,
 sir;
 You slew your friend for love's sake?
 nay, the name.
Chastelard. Faith, I forget.
Queen. Now by the faith I have
 You have no faith to swear by.
Chastelard. A good sword:
 We left him quiet after a thrust or
 twain.
Queen. I would I had been at hand,
 and marked them off
 As the maids did when we played sing-
 ing games:
 You outwent me at rhyming; but for
 faith,
 We fight best there. I would I had
 seen you fight.
Chastelard. I would you had; his
 play was worth an eye;
 He made some gallant way before that
 pass
 Which made me way through him.
Queen. Would I saw that!
 How did you slay him?
Chastelard. A clean pass — this way;
 Right in the side here, where the blood
 has root.
 His wrist went round in pushing, see
 you, thus,
 Or he had pierced me.
Queen. Yea, I see, sweet knight.
 I have a mind to love you for his sake;
 Would I had seen!
Chastelard. Hugues de Marsillac —
 I have the name now; 'twas a goodly
 one
 Before he changed it for a dusty name.
Queen. Talk not of death; I would
 hear living talk
 Of good live swords and good strokes
 struck withal,
 Brave battles and the mirth of mingling
 men,
 Not of cold names you greet a dead
 man with.
 You are yet young for fighting; but in
 fight
 Have you never caught a wound?
Chastelard. Yea, twice or so:
 The first time, in a little outlying field
 (My first field) at the sleepy gray of
 dawn,

They found us drowsy, fumbling at our girths,
And rode us down by heaps; I took a hurt
Here in the shoulder.

Queen. Ah, I mind well now;
Did you not ride a day's space after-ward,
Having two wounds? yea, Dandelot it was,
That Dandelot took word of it. I know,
Sitting at meat when the news came to us

I had nigh swooned but for those Florence eyes

Slanting my way with sleek lids drawn up close —

Yea, and she said, the Italian brokeress,
She said such men were good for great queens' love.

I would you might die, when you come to die,

Like a knight slain. Pray God we make good ends.

For love too, love dies hard or easily,
But some way dies on some day, ere we die.

Chastelard. You made a song once of old flowers and loves,

Will you not sing that rather? 'tis long gone

Since you sang last.

Queen. I had rather sigh than sing,
And sleep than sigh; 'tis long since verily,

But I will once more sing; ay, thus it was.

[Sings.

1.

*J'ai vu faner bien des choses,
Mainte feuille aller au vent.
En songeant aux vieilles roses,
J'ai pleuré souvent.*

2.

*Vois-tu dans les roses mortes
Amour qui sourit caché?
O mon amant, à nos portes
L'as-tu vu couché?*

3.

*As-tu vu jamais au monde
Vénus chasser et courir
Fille de l'onde, avec l'onde
Doit-elle mourir?*

4.

*Aux jours de neige et de givre
L'amour s'effeuille et s'endort;
Avec mai doit-il revivre,
Ou bien est-il mort?*

5.

*Qui sait où s'en vont les roses?
Qui sait où s'en va le vent?
En songeant à telle chose,
J'ai pleuré souvent.*

I never heard yet but love made good knights,

But for pure faith, by Mary's holiness,
I think she lies about men's lips asleep,
And if one kiss or pluck her by the hand

To wake her, why God help your woman's wit,

Faith is but dead; dig her grave deep at heart,

And hide her face with cerecloths; farewell faith.

Would I could tell why I talk idly. Look,

Here come my riddle-readers. Welcome all!

Enter MURRAY, DARNLEY, RANDOLPH, LINDSAY, MORTON, and other Lords.

Sirs, be right welcome. Stand you by my side,

Fair cousin, I must lean on love or fall;
You are a goodly staff, sir; tall enough,

And fair enough to serve. My gentle lords,

I am full glad of God that in great grace
He hath given me such a lordly stay as this;

There is no better friended queen alive.
For the repealing of those banished men

That stand in peril yet of last year's fault,

It is our will; you have our seal to that.
Brother, we hear harsh bruits of bad
report

Blown up and down about our almoner;
See you to this: let him be sought into:
They say lewd folk make ballads of
their spleen,
Strew miry ways of words with talk of
him;

If they have cause let him be spoken
with.

Lindsay. Madam, they charge him
with so rank a life

Were it not well this fellow were
plucked out—

Seeing this is not an eye that doth
offend,

But a blurred glass it were no harm to
break;

Yea rather it were gracious to be done?

Queen. Let him be weighed, and use
him as he is;

I am of my nature pitiful, ye know,
And cannot turn my love unto a thorn

In so brief space. Ye are all most
virtuous;

Yea, there is goodness grafted on this
land;

But yet compassion is some part of
God.

There is much heavier business held on
hand

Than one man's goodness: yea, as
things fare here,

A matter worth more weighing. All
you wot

I am to choose a help to my weak feet,
A lamp before my face, a lord and
friend

To walk with me in weary ways, high
up

Between the wind and rain and the hot
sun.

Now I have chosen a helper to myself,
I wot the best a woman ever won;

A man that loves me, and a royal man,
A goodly love and lord for any queen.

But for the peril and despite of men
I have some time tarried and withheld
myself,

Not fearful of his worthiness nor you,
But with some lady's loathing to let
out

My whole heart's love; for truly this is
hard,

Not like a woman's fashion, shame-
facedness

And noble grave reluctance of herself
To be the tongue and cry of her own
heart.

Nathless plain speech is better than
much wit,

So ye shall bear with me; albeit I think
Ye have caught the mark whereat my
heart is bent.

I have kept close counsel and shut up
men's lips,

But lightly shall a woman's will slip out,
The foolish little wingèd will of her,

Through cheek or eye when tongue is
charmed asleep.

For that good lord I have good will to
wed,

I wot he knew long since which way it
flew,

Even till it lit on his right wrist and
sang.

Lo, here I take him by the hand: fair
lords,

This is my kinsman, made of mine own
blood,

I take to halve the state and services
That bow down to me, and to be my
head,

My chief, my master, my sweet lord
and king.

Now shall I never say "sweet cousin"
more

To my dear head and husband; here,
fair sir,

I give you all the heart of love in me
To gather off my lips. Did it like
you,

The taste of it? sir, it was whole and
true.

God save our king!

Darnley. Nay, nay, sweet love, no
lord;

No king of yours though I were lord
of these.

Queen. Let word be sent to all good
friends of ours

To help us to be glad; England and
France

Shall bear great part of our rejoicings
up.

Give me your hand, dear lord; for from this time

I must not walk alone. Lords, have good cheer:

For you shall have a better face than mine

To set upon your kingly gold and show For Scotland's forehead in the van of things.

Go with us now, and see this news set out.

[*Exeunt QUEEN, DARNLEY, and Lords.*

As CHASTELARD is going out, enter

MARY BEATON.

Mary Beaton. Have you yet heard?

You knew of this?

Chastelard. I know.

I was just thinking how such things were made

And were so fair as this is. Do you know

She held me here and talked,—the most sweet talk

Men ever heard of?

Mary Beaton. You hate me to the heart.

What will you do?

Chastelard. I know not: die some day,

But live as long and lightly as I can.

Will you now love me? faith, but if you do,

It were much better you were dead and hearsed.

Will you do one thing for me?

Mary Beaton. Yea, all things.

Chastelard. Speak truth a little, for God's sake: indeed

It were no harm to do. Come, will you, sweet?

Though it be but to please God.

Mary Beaton. What will you do?

Chastelard. Ay, true, I must do somewhat. Let me see:

To get between and tread upon his face—

Catch both her hands and bid men look at them,

How pure they were—I would do none of these,

Though they got wedded all the days in the year.

We may do well yet when all's come and gone.

I pray you on this wedding night or theirs

Do but one thing that I shall ask of you, And Darnley will not hunger as I shall For that good time. Sweet, will you swear me this?

Mary Beaton. Yea; though to do it were mortal to my soul

As the chief sin.

Chastelard. I thank you: let us go.

ACT III.—THE QUEEN.

SCENE I.—*The Queen's Chamber.*

Night. Lights burning in front of the bed.

Enter CHASTELARD and MARY BEATON.

Mary Beaton. Be tender of your feet

Chastelard. I shall not fail:

These ways have light enough to help a man

That walks with such stirred blood in him as mine.

Mary Beaton. I would yet plead with you to save your head:

Nay, let this be then: sir, I chide you not.

Nay, let all come. Do not abide he yet.

Chastelard. Have you read never in

French books the song

Called the Duke's Song, some boy made ages back,

A song of drag-nets hauled across thwart seas

And plucked up with rent sides, and caught therein

A strange-haired woman with sad singing lips,

Cold in the cheek like any stray of sea,

And sweet to touch? so that men sewing her face,

And how she sighed out little Ahs of pain

And soft cries sobbing sideways from her mouth,

Fell in hot love, and having lain with her

Died soon? One time I could have told it through:

Now I have kissed the sea-witch on her
eyes,
And my lips ache with it: but I shall
sleep

Full soon, and a good space of sleep.

Mary Beaton. Alas!

Chastelard. What makes you sigh
though I be found a fool?

You have no blame: and for my death,
sweet friend,

I never could have lived long either way.

Why, as I live, the joy I have of this

Would make men mad that were not
mad with love;

I hear my blood sing, and my lifted heart

Is like a springing water blown of wind

For pleasure of this deed. Now, in
God's name,

I swear if there be danger in delight

I must die now: if joys have deadly
teeth,

I'll have them bite my soul to death,
and end

In the old asp's way, Egyptian-wise; be
killed

In a royal purple fashion. Look, my
love

Would kill me if my body were past
hurt

Of any man's hand; and to die thereof,

I say, is sweeter than all sorts of life.

I would not have her love me now, for
then

I should die meanlier some time. I am
safe,

Sure of her face, my life's end in her
sight,

My blood shed out about her feet — by
God,

My heart feels drunken when I think
of it.

See you, she will not rid herself of me,

Not though she slay me: her sweet lips
and life

Will smell of my spilt blood.

Mary Beaton. Give me good night.

Chastelard. Yea, and good thanks.

[Exit MARY BEATON.]

Here is the very place:

Here has her body bowed the pillows
in,

And here her head thrust under made
the sheet

Smell soft of her mixed hair and spice:
even here

Her arms pushed back the coverlet,
pulled here

The golden silken curtain halfway in,

It may be, and made room to lean out
loose,

Fair tender fallen arms. Now, if God
would,

Doubtless he might take pity on my
soul

To give me three clear hours, and then
red hell

Snare me forever: this were merciful:

If I were God now, I should do thus
much.

I must die next, and this were not so
hard

For him to let me eat sweet fruit, and
die

With my lips sweet from it. For one
shall have

This fare for common days'-bread, which
to me

Should be a touch kept always on my
sense

To make hell soft, yea, the keen pain
of hell

Soft as the loosening of wound arms in
sleep.

Ah, love is good, and the worst part of it
More than all things but death. She

will be here

In some small while, and see me face
to face

That am to give up life for her, and go
Where a man lies with all his loves

put out

And his lips full of earth. I think on
her,

And the old pleasure stings and makes
half-tears

Under mine eyelids. Prithee, love,
come fast,

That I may die soon; yea, some kisses
through,

I shall die joyfully enough, so God

Keep me alive till then. I feel her
feet

Coming far off; now must I hold my
heart,

Steadying my blood to see her patiently

[Hides himself by the bed]

Enter the QUEEN and DARNLEY.

Queen. Nay, now go back: I have sent off my folk,

Maries and all. Pray you, let be my hair;

I cannot twist the gold thread out of it
That you wound in so close. Look,
here it clings:

Ah! now you mar my hair unwinding it.
Do me no hurt, sir.

Darnley. I would do you ease;
Let me stay here.

Queen. Nay, will you go, my lord?

Darnley. Eh? would you use me as
a girl does fruit,
Touched with her mouth and pulled
away for game
To look thereon ere her lips feed? but
see,

By God, I fare the worse for you.

Queen. Fair sir,
Give me this hour to watch with and
say prayers:

You have not faith—it needs me to
say prayers,
That with commending of this deed to
God

I may get grace for it.

Darnley. Why, lacks it grace?

Is not all wedlock gracious of itself?

Queen. Nay, that I know not of.
Come, sweet, be hence.

Darnley. You have a sort of jewel
in your neck
That's like mine here.

Queen. Keep off your hands and go:
You have no courtesy to be a king.

Darnley. Well, I will go: nay, but I
thwart you not.

Do as you will, and get you grace;
farewell,

And for my part, grace keep this watch
with me!

For I need grace to bear with you so
much. *[Exit.]*

Queen. So, he is forth. Let me be-
hold myself;

I am too pale to be so hot; I marvel
So little color should be bold in the
face

When the blood is not quieted. I have
But a brief space to cool my thoughts
upon.

If one should wear the hair thus heaped
and curled

Would it look best? or this way in the
neck?

Could one ungirdle in such wise one's
heart,

[Taking off her girdle.]

And ease it inwards as the waist is
eased

By slackening of the slid clasp on it!

How soft the silk is—gracious color
too;

Violet shadows like new veins thrown
up

Each arm, and gold to fleck the faint
sweet green

Where the wrist lies thus eased. I am
right glad

I have no maids about to hasten me:

So I will rest, and see my hair shed
down

On either silk side of my woven sleeves,
Get some new way to bind it back with
—yea,

Fair mirror-glass, I am well ware of
you,

Yea, I know that, I am quite beautiful.
How my hair shines!—Fair face, be
friends with me,

And I will sing to you: look in my face
Now, and your mouth must help the
song in mine.

Alys la châtelaine

Voit venir de par Seine

Thiebault le capitaine

Qui parle ainsi:

Was that the wind in the casement?
nay, no more

But the comb drawn through half my
hissing hair

Laid on my arms—yet my flesh moved
at it.

Dans ma camaille

Plus de clou qui vaille,

Dans ma cotte-maille

Plus de fer aussi.

Ah, but I wrong the ballad-verse:
what's good

In such frayed fringes of old rhymes,
to make

Their broken burden lag with us? me-
seems

I could be sad now if I fell to think
The least sad thing; ay, that sweet
lady's fool,

Fool sorrow, would make merry with
mine eyes

For a small thing. Nay, but I will
keep glad.

Nor shall old sorrow be false friends
with me.

But my first wedding was not like to
this—

Fair faces then and laughter and sweet
game,

And a pale little mouth that clung on
mine

When I had kissed him by the faded
eyes

And either thin cheek beating with
faint blood.

Well, he was sure to die soon; I do
think

He would have given his body to be
slain,

Having embraced my body. Now, God
knows,

I have no man to do as much for me
As give me but a little of his blood

To fill my beauty from, though I go
down

Pale to my grave for want—I think
not. Pale—

I am too pale surely—Ah!

[*Sees him in the glass, coming for-
ward.*

Chastelard. Be not afraid.

Queen. Saint Mary! what a shaken
wit have I!

Nay, is it you? who let you through
the doors?

Where be my maidens? which way got
you in?

Nay, but stand up, kiss not my hands
so hard;

By God's fair body, if you but breathe
on them

You are just dead and slain at once.
What adder

Has bit you mirthful mad? for by this
light

A man to have his head laughed off for
mirth

Is no great jest. Lay not your eyes on
me;

What! would you not be slain?

Chastelard. I pray you, madam,
Bear with me a brief space, and let me
speak.

I will not touch your garments even,
nor speak

But in soft wise, and look some other
way,

If that it like you; for I came not here
For pleasure of the eyes; yet, if you
will,

Let me look on you.

Queen. As you will, fair sir.

Give me that coif to gather in my
hair—

I thank you—and my girdle—nay,
that side.

Speak, if you will: yet if you will be
gone,

Why, you shall go, because I hate you
not.

You know that I might slay you with
my lips,

With calling out? but I will hold my
peace.

Chastelard. Yea, do some while. I
had a thing to say;

I know not wholly what thing. O my
sweet,

I am come here to take farewell of love
That I have served, and life that I have
lived

Made up of love, here in the sight of
you

That all my life's time I loved more
than God,

Who quits me thus with bitter death
for it.

For you well know that I must shortly
die,

My life being wound about you as it is,
Who love me not; yet do not hate me,
sweet,

But tell me wherein I came short of
love;

For doubtless I came short of a just
love,

And fell in some fool's fault that anger-
ed you.

Now that I talk men dig my grave for
me

Out in the rain, and in a little while
I shall be thrust in some sad space of
earth

Out of your eyes; and you, O you my
love,

A newly wedded lady full of mirth
And a queen girt with all good people's
love,

You shall be fair and merry in all your
days.

Is this so much for me to have of you?
Do but speak, sweet: I know these are
no words

A man should say though he were now
to die,

But I am as a child for love, and have
No strength at heart; yea, I am afraid
to die,

For the harsh dust will lie upon my
face

Too thick to see you pass. Look how
I love you;

I did so love you always, that your
face

Seen through my sleep has wrung mine
eyes to tears

For pure delight in you. Why do you
thus?

You answer not, but your lips curl in
twain

And your face moves; there, I shall
make you weep,

And be a coward too; it were much
best

I should be slain.

Queen. Yea, best such folk were slain;
Why should they live to cozen fools
with lies?

You would swear now you have used
me faithfully;

Shall I not make you swear? I am
ware of you:

You will not do it, nay, for the fear of
God

You will not swear. Come, I am mer-
ciful;

God made a foolish woman, making me,
And I have loved your mistress with
whole heart;

Say you do love her, you shall marry
her

And she give thanks: yet I could wish
your love

Had not so lightly chosen forth a face;
For your fair sake, because I hate you
not.

Chastelard. What is to say? why, you
do surely know

That since my days were counted for a
man's

I have loved you; yea, how past help
and sense,

Whatever thing was bitter to my love,
I have loved you; how when I rode in
war

Your face went floated in among men's
helms,

Your voice went through the shriek of
slipping swords;

Yea, and I never have loved women
well,

Seeing always in my sight I had your
lips

Curled over, red and sweet; and the
soft space

Of carven brows, and splendor of great
throat

Swayed lily-wise: what pleasure should
one have

To wind his arms about a lesser love?

I have seen you; why, this were joy
enough

For God's eyes up in heaven, only to see
And to come never nearer than I am.

Why, it was in my flesh, my bone and
blood,

Bound in my brain, to love you; yea,
and writ

All my heart over: if I would lie to you,
I doubt I could not lie. Ah, you see
now,

You know now well enough; yea, there,
sweet love,

Let me kiss there.

Queen. I love you best of them.

Clasp me quite round till your lips
cleave on mine, —

False mine, that did you wrong. For-
give them dearly,

As you are sweet to them; for by love's
love

I am not that evil woman in my heart
That laughs at a rent faith. O Chas-
telard,

Since this was broken to me of your
new love

I have not seen the face of a sweet hour.
Nay, if there be no pardon in a man,
What shall a woman have for loving
him?

Pardon me, sweet.

Chastelard. Yea, so I pardon you,
And this side now; the first way. Would
God please

To slay me so! who knows how he
might please?

Now I am thinking, if you know it not,
How I might kill you, kiss your breath
clean out,

And take your soul to bring mine
through to God

That our two souls might close and be
one twain

Or a twain one, and God himself want
skill

To set us either severally apart.

Oh, you must overlive me many years,
And many years my soul be in waste
hell;

But when some time God can no more
refrain

To lay death like a kiss across your
lips,

And great lords bear you clothed with
funeral things,

And your crown girded over deadly
brows,

Then after all your happy reach of life
For pity you shall touch me with your
eyes,

Remembering love was fellow with my
flesh

Here in sweet earth, and make me well
of love,

And heal my many years with piteous-
ness.

Queen. You talk too sadly and too
feignedly.

Chastelard. Too sad, but not too
feigned; I am sad

That I shall die here without feigning
thus;

And without feigning I were fain to live.

Queen. Alas, you will be taken pres-
ently,

And then you are but dead. Pray you,
get hence.

Chastelard. I will not.

Queen. Nay, for God's love be away;

You will be slain, and I get shame.
God's mercy!

You were stark mad to come here; kiss
me, sweet.

Oh, I do love you more than all men!
yea,

Take my lips to you, close mine eyes
up fast,

So you leave hold a little: there, for
pity,

Abide now, and to-morrow come to
me.

Nay, lest one see red kisses in my
throat—

Dear God! what shall I give you to be
gone?

Chastelard. I will not go. Look,
here's full night grown up;

Why should I seek to sleep away
from here?

The place is soft, and the lights burn
for sleep;

Be not you moved; I shall lie well
enough.

Queen. You are utterly undone.
Sweet, by my life,

You shall be saved with taking ship at
once.

For if you stay this foolish love's hour
out

There is not ten days' likely life in you.
This is no choice.

Chastelard. Nay, for I will not go.

Queen. Oh, me! this is that Bayard's
blood of yours

That makes you mad; yea, and you
shall not stay.

I do not understand. Mind, you must
die.

Alas, poor lord, you have no sense of
me;

I shall be deadly to you.

Chastelard. Yea, I saw that;

But I saw not that when my death's
day came

You could be quite so sweet to me.

Queen. My love!

If I could kiss my heart's root out on
you,

You would taste love hid at the core of
me.

Chastelard. Kiss me twice more
This beautiful bowed head

That has such hair with kissing ripples
in,

And shivering soft eyelashes and brows
With fluttered blood; but laugh a little,
sweetly,

That I may see your sad mouth's laugh-
ing look

I have used sweet hours in seeing. Oh,
will you weep?

I pray you, do not weep.

Queen. Nay, dear, I have

No tears in me; I never shall weep
much,

I think, in all my life: I have wept for
wrath

Sometimes, and for mere pain, but for
love's pity

I cannot weep at all. I would to God
You loved me less; I give you all I can

For all this love of yours, and yet I am
sure

I shall live out the sorrow of your death
And be glad afterwards. You know I

am sorry.

I should weep now; forgive me for
your part.

God made me hard, I think. Alas!
you see

I had fain been other than I am.

Chastelard. Yea, love.

Comfort your heart. What way am I
to die?

Queen. Ah! will you go yet, sweet?

Chastelard. No, by God's body.

You will not see? how shall I make
you see?

Look, it may be love was a sort of curse
Made for my plague, and mixed up with
my days

Somewise in their beginning; or indeed
A bitter birth begotten of sad stars

At mine own body's birth, that heaven
might make

My life taste sharp where other men
drank sweet;

But whether in heavy body or broken
soul,

I know it must go on to be my death.

There was the matter of my fate in me
When I was fashioned first, and given
such life

As goes with a sad end; no fault but
God's.

Yea, and for all this I am not penitent,
You see I am perfect in these sins of
mine,

I have my sins writ in a book to read;
Now I shall die, and be well done with
this.

But I am sure you cannot see such
things,

God knows I blame you not.

Queen. What shall be said?

You know most well that I am sorrow-
ful.

But you should chide me. Sweet, you
have seen fair wars,

Have seen men slain and ridden red in
them;

Why will you die a chamberer's death
like this?

What! shall no praise be written of my
knight,

For my fame's sake?

Chastelard. Nay, no great praise, I
think;

I will no more; what should I do with
death,

Though I died goodly out of sight of
you?

I have gone once: here am I set now,
sweet,

Till the end come. That is your hus-
band, hark!

He knocks at the outer door. Kiss me
just once.

You know now all you have to say.
Nay, love,

Let him come quickly.

*Enter DARNLEY, and afterwards the
MARIES.*

Darnley. Yea, what thing is here?

Ay, this was what the doors shut fast
upon—

Ay, trust you to be fast at prayer, my
sweet?

By God, I have a mind—

Chastelard. What mind then, sir?

A liar's lewd mind, to coin sins for jest.
Because you take me in such wise as
this?

Look you, I have to die soon, and I
swear,

That am no liar, but a free knight and
lord,

I shall die clear of any sin to you,

Save that I came for no good will of mine;
 I am no carle, I play fair games with faith,
 And by mine honor for my sake I swear
 I say but truth; for no man's sake save mine,
 Lest I die shamed. Madam, I pray you say
 I am no liar; you know me what I am,
 A sinful man and shortly to be slain,
 That in a simple insolence of love
 Have stained with a fool's eyes your holy hours
 And with a fool's words put your pity out;
 Nathless you know if I be liar or no,
 Wherefore for God's sake give me grace to swear
 (Yea, for mine too) how past all praise you are,
 And stainless of all shame; and how all men
 Lie, saying you are not most good and innocent,
 Yea, the one thing good as God.
Darnley. O sir, we know
 You can swear well, being taken; you fair French
 Dare swallow God's name for a lewd love-sake
 As it were water. Nay, we know, we know;
 Save your sweet breath now, lest you lack it soon;
 We are simple, we; we have not heard of you.
 Madam, by God you are well shamed in him:
 Ay, trust you to be fingering in one's face,
 Play with one's neck-chain? ah, your maiden's man,
 A relic of your people's?
Chastelard. Hold your peace,
 Or I will set an edge on your own lie
 Shall scar yourself. Madam, have out your guard:
 'Tis time I were got hence.
Queen. Sweet Hamilton,
 Hold you my hand, and help me to sit down.

O Henry, I am beaten from my wits!
 Let me have time, and live; call out my people —
 Bring forth some armed guard to lay hold on him;
 But see no man be slain. Sirs, hide your swords;
 I will not have men slain.
Darnley. What! is this true?
 Call the queen's people — help the queen there, you —
 Ho, sirs! come in.
Enter some with the Guard.
Queen. Lay hold upon that man;
 Bear him away, but see he have no hurt.
Chastelard. Into your hands I render up myself
 With a free heart; deal with me how you list,
 But courteously, I pray you. Take my sword.
 Farewell, great queen; the sweetness in your look
 Makes life look bitter on me. Farewell, sirs. [*He is taken out.*]
Darnley. Yea, pluck him forth, and have him hanged by dawn;
 He shall find bed enow to sleep. God's love!
 That such a knave should be a knight like this!
Queen. Sir, peace awhile; this shall be as I please;
 Take patience to you. Lords, I pray you see
 All be done goodly; look they wrong him not.
 Carmichael, you shall sleep with me to-night;
 I am sorely shaken, even to the heart.
 Fair lords,
 I thank you for your care. Sweet, stay by me.

ACT IV. — MURRAY.

SCENE I. — *The Queen's Lodging at St. Andrew's.*

The QUEEN and the four MARIES.

Queen. Why will you break my heart with praying to me?

You Seyton, you Carmichael, you have wits,

You are not all run to tears; you do not think

It is my wrath or will that whets this axe

Against his neck?

Mary Seyton. Nay, these three weeks agoe

I said the queen's wrath was not sharp enough

To shear a neck.

Queen. Sweet, and you did me right, And look you, what my mercy bears to fruit,

Danger and deadly speech and a fresh fault

Before the first was cool in people's lips;

A goodly mercy: and I wash hands of it.—

Speak you, there; have you ever found me sharp?

You weep and whisper with sloped necks and heads

Like two sick birds; do you think shame of me?

Nay, I thank God none can think shame of me;

But am I bitter, think you, to men's faults?

I think I am too merciful, too meek:

Why, if I could I would yet save this man;

'Tis just boy's madness; a soft stripe or two

Would do to scourge the fault in his French blood.

I would fain let him go. You, Hamilton,

You have a heart thewed harder than my heart;

When mine would threat it sighs, and wrath in it

Has a bird's flight and station, starves before

It can well feed or fly: my pulse of wrath

Sounds tender as the running down of tears.

You are the hardest woman I have known,

Your blood has frost and cruel gall in it,

You hold men off with bitter lips and eyes—

Such maidens should serve Engiand; now, perfoy,

I doubt you would have got him slain at once.

Come, would you not? come, would you let him live?

Mary Hamilton. Yes—I think yes; I cannot tell; maybe

I would have seen him punished.

Queen. Look you now, There's maiden mercy; I would have him live—

For all my wifehood, maybe I weep too:

Here's a mere maiden falls to slaying at once,

Small shrift for her; God keep us from such hearts!

I am a queen too that would have him live,

But one that has no wrong and is no queen,

She would— What are you saying there, you twain?

Mary Carmichael. I said a queen's face and so fair an one's

Would lose no grace for giving grace away;

That gift comes back upon the mouth it left,

And makes it sweeter, and sets fresh red on it.

Queen. This comes of sonnets when the dance draws breath;

These talking times will make a dearth of grace.

But you—what ails you that your lips are shut?

Weep, if you will; here are four friends of yours

To weep as fast for pity of your tears.

Do you desire him dead? nay, but men say

He was your friend, he fought them on your side,

He made you songs—God knows what songs he made!

Speak you for him a little: will you not?

Mary Beaton. Madam, I have no words.

Queen. No words? no pity —

Have you no mercies for such men?
God help!

It seems I am the meekest heart on
earth —

Yea, the one tender woman left alive,
And knew it not. I will not let him
live,

For all my pity of him.

Mary Beaton. Nay, but, madam,
For God's love look a little to this
thing.

If you do slay him you are but shamed
to death;

All men will cry upon you, women
weep,

Turning your sweet name bitter with
their tears;

Red shame grow up out of your mem-
ory

And burn his face that would speak
well of you;

You shall have no good word nor pity,
none,

Till some such end be fallen upon you:
nay,

I am but cold, I knew I had no words.
I will keep silence.

Queen. Yea, now, as I live,
I wist not of it: troth, he shall not
die.

See you, I am pitiful, compassionate,
I would not have men slain for my

love's sake,
But if he live to do me three times

wrong,
Why then my shame would grow up

green and red
Like any flower. I am not whole at

heart;
In faith, I wot not what such things

should be.
I doubt it is but dangerous; he must

die.

Mary Beaton. Yea, but you will not
slay him.

Queen. Swear me that,
I'll say he shall not die for your oath's

sake.
What will you do for grief when he is

dead?
Mary Beaton. Nothing for grief, but

hold my peace and die.

Queen. Why, for your sweet sake one
might let him live;

But the first fault was a green seed of
shame,

And now the flower, and deadly fruit
will come

With apple-time in autumn. By my
life,

I would they had slain him there in
Edinburgh;

But I reprove him; lo the thank I get,
To set the base folk muttering like

smoked bees
Of shame and love, and how love comes

of shame,
And how the queen loves shame that

comes of love;
Yet I say naught and go about my

ways,
And this mad fellow that I respited

Being forth and free, lo now the second
time

Ye take him by my bed in wait. Now
see

If I can get goodwill to pardon him;
With what a face may I crave leave of

men
To respite him, being young and a good
knight

And mad for perfect love? shall I go
say, —

*Dear lords, because ye took him shame-
fully,*

*Let him not die; because his fault is
foul,*

*Let him not die; because if he do live
I shall be held a harlot of all men,*

*I pray you, sweet sirs, that he may not
die?*

Mary Beaton. Madam, for me I would
not have him live;

Mine own heart's life was ended with
my fame,

And my life's breath will shortly follow
them;

So that I care not much; for you wot
well

I have lost love and shame and fame,
and all

To no good end; nor while he had his
life

Have I got good of him that was my
love.

Save that for courtesy (which may God quit)

He kissed me once as one might kiss for love

Out of great pity for me; saving this, He never did me grace in all his life.

And when you have slain him, madam, it may be

I shall get grace of him in some new way

In a new place, if God have care of us.

Queen. Bid you my brother to me presently. [*Exeunt Maries.*]

And yet the thing is pitiful; I would There were some way. To send him overseas,

Out past the long firths to the cold keen sea

Where the sharp sound is that one hears up here —

Or hold him in strong prison till he died —

He would die shortly — or to set him free

And use him softly till his brains were healed —

There is no way. Now never while I live

Shall we twain love together any more, Nor sit at rhyme as we were used to do,

Nor each kiss other only with the eyes A great way off ere hand or lip could reach;

There is no way.

Enter Murray. O, you are welcome, sir;

You know what need I have; but I praise heaven,

Having such need, I have such help of you.

I do believe no queen God ever made Was better holpen than I look to be.

What! if two brethren love not heartily, Who shall be good to either one of them?

Murray. Madam, I have great joy of your good will.

Queen. I pray you, brother, use no courtesies:

I have some fear you will not suffer me When I shall speak. Fear is a fool, I think,

Yet hath he wit enow to fool my wits,

Being but a woman's. Do not answer me

Till you shall know; yet if you have a word

I shall be fain to hear it; but I think There is no word to help me; no man's word.

There be two things yet that should do me good, —

A speeding arm and a great heart. My lord,

I am soft-spirited as women are, And ye wot well I have no harder heart:

Yea, with my will I would not slay a thing,

But all should live right sweetly if I might;

So that man's blood-spilling lies hard on me.

I have a work yet for mine honor's sake,

A thing to do, God wot I know not how,

Nor how to crave it of you: nay, by heaven,

I will not shame myself to show it you: I have not heart.

Murray. Why, if it may be done With any honor, or with good men's excuse,

I shall well do it.

Queen. I would I wist that well. Sir, do you love me?

Murray. Yea, you know I do.

Queen. In faith, you should well love me, for I love

The least man in your following for your sake

With a whole sister's heart.

Murray. Speak simply, madam; I must obey you, being your bounden man.

Queen. Sir, so it is you know what things have been,

Even to the endangering of mine innocent name,

And by no fault, but by men's evil will.

If Chastelard have trial openly, I am but shamed.

Murray. This were a wound indeed, If your good name should lie upon his lip.

Queen. I will the judges put him not to plead,
For my fame's sake; he shall not answer them.

Murray. What! think you he will speak against your fame?

Queen. I know not; men might feign belief of him
For hate of me; it may be he will speak;

In brief, I will not have him held to proof.

Murray. Well, if this be, what good is to be done?

Queen. Is there no way but he must speak to them,
Being had to trial plainly?

Murray. I think, none.

Queen. Now mark, my lord; I swear he will not speak.

Murray. It were the best if you could make that sure.

Queen. There is one way. Look, sir, he shall not do it:
Shall not, or will not, either is one way;

I speak as I would have you understand.

Murray. Let me not guess at you; speak certainly.

Queen. You will not mind me: let him be removed;
Take means to get me surety: there be means.

Murray. So, in your mind, I have to slay the man?

Queen. Is there a mean for me to save the man?

Murray. Truly I see no mean except your love.

Queen. What love is that, my lord? what think you of,
Talking of love and of love's mean in me

And of your guesses and of slaying him?

Why, I say naught, have naught to say: God help me!

I bid you but take surety of the man, Get him removed.

Murray. Come, come, be clear with me;

You bid me to despatch him privily.

Queen. God send me sufferance! I bid you, sir?

Nay, do not go: what matter if I did? Nathless I never bade you; no, by God.

Be not so wroth; you are my brother born;

Why do you dwell upon me with such eyes?

For love of God you should not bear me hard.

Murray. What! are you made of flesh?

Queen. Oh, now I see.

You had rather lose your wits to do me harm

Than keep sound wits to help me.

Murray. It is right strange;
The worst man living hath some fear, some love,

Holds somewhat dear a little for life's sake,

Keeps fast to some compassion; you have none;

You know of nothing that remembrance knows

To make you tender. I must slay the man?

Nay, I will do it.

Queen. Do, if you be not mad.
I am sorry for him; and he must needs die.

I would I were assured you hate me not:

I have no heart to slay him by my will.

I pray you think not bitterly of me.

Murray. Is it your pleasure such a thing were done?

Queen. Yea, by God's body is it, certainly.

Murray. Nay, for your love then, and for honor's sake,
This thing must be.

Queen. Yea, should I set you on?

Even for my love then, I beseech you, sir,

To seek him out, and lest he prate of me

To put your knife into him ere he come forth:

Meseems this were not such wild work to do.

Murray. I'll have him in the prison taken off.

Queen. I am bounden to you, even for my name's sake,
When that is done.

Murray. I pray you fear me not
Farewell. I would such things were not to do,

Or not for me; yea, not for any man.

[*Exit.*

Queen. Alas! what honor have I to give thanks?

I would he had denied me: I had held my peace

Thenceforth forever; but he wrung out the word,

Caught it before my lip was fain of it—

It was his fault to put it in my mind,
Yea, and to feign a loathing of his fault.

Now is he about devising my love's death,

And nothing loath. Nay, since he must needs die,

Would he were dead and come alive again

And I might keep him safe! He doth live now,

And I may do what love I will to him;
But by to-morrow he will be stark dead,
Stark slain and dead; and for no sort of love

Will he so much as kiss me half a kiss.
Were this to do I would not do it again.

Re-enter MURRAY.

What! have you taken order? is it done?

It were impossible to do so soon.

Nay, answer me.

Murray. Madam, I will not do it.

Queen. How did you say? I pray, sir, speak again:

I know not what you said.

Murray. I say I will not;

I have thought thereof, and have made up my heart

To have no part in this: look you to it.

Queen. O, for God's sake! you will not have me shamed?

Murray. I will not dip my hand into your sin.

Queen. It were a good deed to deliver me.

I am but woman, of one blood with you,
A feeble woman; put me not to shame;
I pray you of your pity do me right.

Yea, and no fleck of blood shall cleave to you

For a just deed.

Murray. I know not: I will none.

Queen. Oh, you will never let him speak to them

To put me in such shame? Why, I should die

Out of pure shame and mine own burning blood;

Yea, my face feels the shame lay hold on it,

I am half burnt already in my thought.
Take pity of me. Think how shame

slays a man;

How shall I live, then? would you have me dead?

I pray you for our dead dear father's sake,

Let not men mock at me. Nay, if he speak,

I shall be sung in mine own towns.
Have pity.

What! will you let men stone me in the ways?

Murray. Madam, I shall take pains the best I may

To save your honor, and what thing lieth in me

That will I do; but no close manslaughterings.

I will not have God's judgment grip my throat

When I am dead, to hale me into hell

For a man's sake slain on this wise.
Take heed.

See you to that. [*Exit.*

Queen. One of you maidens there
Bid my lord hither. Now, by Mary's soul,

He shall not die and bring me into shame.

There's treason in you like a fever, hot,
My holy-natured brother, cheek and eye:

You look red through with it; sick, honor-sick,

pecked with the blain of treason,
leper-like,—

A scrupulous fair traitor with clean
lips.

If one should sue to hell to do him
good,

He were as brotherly holpen as I am.

This man must live, and say no harm
of me;

may reprieve and cast him forth;
yea, so—

This were the best; or if he die mid-
way—

Yea, any thing, so that he die not here.

[To the MARIES within.]

Fetch hither Darnley. Nay, ye gape
on me—

What! doth he sleep, or feeds, or plays
at games?

Why, I would see him; I am weary for
his sake;

Did my lord in.—Nathless he will but
chide;

Nay, fleer and laugh: what should one
say to him?

There were some word if one could hit
on it;

Some way to close with him: I wot not.
—Sir,

Enter DARNLEY.

Please it your love I have a suit to you.

Darnley. What sort of suit?

Queen. Nay, if you be not friends—
I have no suit towards mine enemies.

Darnley. Eh! do I look now like
your enemy?

Queen. You have a way of peering
under brow

I do not like. If you see any thing
in me that irks you, I will painfully

Labor to lose it: do but show me favor,
And as I am your faithful humble wife,

This foolishness shall be removed
in me.

Darnley. Why do you laugh and
mock me with stretched hands?

Faith, I see no such thing.

Queen. That is well seen.

Come, I will take my heart between my
lips,

Use it not hardly. Sir, my suit begins;
That you would please to make me that

I am,

(In sooth I think I am) mistress and
queen

Of mine own people.

Darnley. Why, this is no suit;

This is a simple matter, and your own.

Queen. It was, before God made you
king of me.

Darnley. No king, by God's grace;
were I such a king,

I'd sell my kingdom for six roods of rye.

Queen. You are too sharp upon my
words; I would

Have leave of you to free a man con-
demned.

Darnley. What man is that, sweet?

Queen. Such a mad poor man

As God desires us use not cruelly.

Darnley. Is there no name a man
may call him by?

Queen. Nay, my fair master, what
fair game is this?

Why, you do know him: it is Chaste-
lard.

Darnley. Ay, is it soothly?

Queen. By my life, it is;

Sweet, as you tender me, so pardon him.

Darnley. As he doth tender you, so
pardon me;

For, if it were the mean to save my life,
He should not live a day.

Queen. Nay, shall not he?

Darnley. Look what an evil wit old
Fortune hath:

Why, I came here to get his time cut
off.

This second fault is meat for lewd
men's mouths;

You were best have him slain at once.
'Tis hot.

Queen. Give me the warrant, and sit
down, my lord.

Why, I will sign it; what, I understand
How this must be. Should not my

name stand here?

Darnley. Yea, there, and here the
seal.

Queen. Ay, so you say.

Shall I say too what I am thinking of?

Darnley. Do, if you will.

Queen. I do not like your suit.

Darnley. 'Tis of no Frenchman fash-
ion.

Queen. No, God wot;

'Tis nowise great men's fashion in
French land
To clap a headsman's tabard on their
backs.

Darnley. No, madam?

Queen. No; I never wist of that.

Is it a month gone I did call you lord?
I chose you by no straying stroke of
sight,

But with my heart to love you heartily.
Did I wrong then? did mine eye draw
my heart?

I know not; sir, it may be I did wrong:
And yet to see you I should call it right
Even yet to love you; and would choose
again,

Again to choose you.

Darnley. There, I love you too,
Take that for sooth, and let me take
this hence.

Queen. O, do you think I hold you
off with words?

Why, take it then; there is my hand-
writing,

And here the hand that you shall slay
him with.

'Tis a fair hand, a maiden-colored one:
I doubt yet it has never slain a man.

You never fought yet save for game, I
wis.

Nay, thank me not, but have it from
my sight;

Go and make haste for fear he be got
forth:

It may be such a man is dangerous;
Who knows what friends he hath? and
by my faith

I doubt he hath seen some fighting, I
do fear

He hath fought and shed men's blood;
ye are wise men

That will not leave such dangerous
things alive;

"Twere well he died the sooner for your
sakes.

Pray you make haste; it is not fit he
live.

Darnley. What! will you let him die
so easily?

Queen. Why, God have mercy! what
way should one take

To please such people? there's some
cunning way,

Something I miss, out of my simple soul!
What! must one say "Beseech you do
no harm,"

Or "for my love, sweet cousins, be not
hard,"

Or "let him live but till the vane come
round"—

Will such things please you? well then,
have your way;

Sir, I desire you, kneeling down with
tears,

With sighs and tears, fair sir, require
of you,

Considering of my love I bear this man,
Just for my love's sake let him not be
hanged

Before the sundown; do thus much for
me,

To have a queen's prayers follow after
you.

Darnley. I know no need for you to
gibe at me.

Queen. Alack! what heart then shall
I have to jest?

There is no woman jests in such a
wise—

*For the shame's sake I pray you hang
him not,*

*Seeing how I love him, save indeed in
silk,*

Sweet twisted silk of my sad handiwork.
Nay, and you will not do so much for
me;

You vex your lip, biting the blood and
all:

Were this so hard, and you compassion-
ate?

I am in sore case then, and will weep
indeed.

Darnley. What do you mean to cast
such gibes at me?

Queen. Woe's me, and will you turn
my tears to thorns?

Nay, set your eyes a little in my face:
See, do I weep? what will you make of
me?

Will you not swear I love this prisoner?
Ye are wise, and ye will have it; yet
for me

I wist not of it. We are but feeble
fools,

And love may catch us when we lie
asleep,

And yet God knows we know not this
a whit.

Come, look on me, swear you believe
it not :

It may be I will take your word for that.

Darnley. Do you not love him? nay,
but verily?

Queen. Now then, make answer to me
verily,

Which of us twain is wiser? for my
part

I will not swear I love not, if you will ;

Ye be wise men and many men, my
lords,

And ye will have me love him, ye will
swear

That I do love him ; who shall say ye
lie?

Look on your paper ; maybe I have
wept :

Doubtless I love your hanged man in
my heart.

What ! is the writing smutched or gone
awry?

Or blurred — ay, surely so much — with
one tear,

One little sharp tear strayed on it by
chance?

Come, come, the man is deadly danger-
ous ;

Let him die presently.

Darnley. You do not love him ;

Well, yet he need not die ; it were right
hard

To hang the fool because you love him
not.

Queen. You have keen wits and there-
to courtesy

To catch me with. No, let this man
not die ;

It were no such perpetual praise to you

To be his doomsman, and in doglike
wise

Bite his brief life in twain.

Darnley. Truly it were not.

Queen. Then for your honor and my
love of you

(Oh, I do love you ! but you know not,
sweet,

You shall see how much), think you for
their sake

He may go free?

Darnley. How, freely forth of us?

But yet he loves you, and being mad
with love

Makes matter for base mouths to chew
upon :

'Twere best he live not yet.

Queen. Will you say that?

Darnley. Why should he live to breed
you bad reports?

Let him die first.

Queen. Sweet, for your sake, not so.

Darnley. Fret not yourself to pity ;
let him die.

Queen. Come, let him live a little ; it
shall be

A grace to us.

Darnley. By God, he dies at once.

Queen. Now, by God's mother, if I
respite him,

Though you were all the race of you in
one,

And had more tongues than hairs to
cry on me,

He should not lose a hair.

Darnley. This is mere mercy —

But you thank God you love him not a
whit?

Queen. It shall be what it please ;
and if I please

It shall be any thing. Give me the war-
rant.

Darnley. Nay, for your sake and love
of you, not I,

To make it dangerous.

Queen. Oh, God's pity, sir !

You are tender of me ; will you serve
me so,

Against mine own will, shew me so
much love,

Do me good service that I loath being
done,

Out of pure pity?

Darnley. Nay, your word shall stand.

Queen. What makes you gape so
beastlike after blood?

Were you not bred up on some hang-
man's hire,

And dieted with fleshmeats at his hand,
And fed into a fool? Give me that

paper.

Darnley. Now for that word I will not.

Queen. Nay, sweet love,

For your own sake be just a little wise :
Come, I beseech you.

Darnley. Pluck not at my hands.

Queen. No, that I will not: I am brain-broken, mad;

Pity my madness for sweet marriage-sake

And my great love's; I love you to say this;

I would not have you cross me, out of love.

But for true love should I not chafe indeed?

And now I do not.

Darnley. Yea, and late you chid, You chafed and jested and blew soft and hard—

No, for that "fool" you shall not fool me so.

Queen. You are no churl, sweet, will you see me weep?

Look, I weep now; be friends with my poor tears.

Think each of them beseeches you of love,

And hath some tongue to cry on you for love,

And speak soft things; for that which loves not you

Is none of mine, not though they grow of grief

And grief of you; be not too hard with them.

You would not of your own heart slay a man;

Nay, if you will, in God's name make me weep,

I will not hate you; but at heart, sweet lord,

Be not at heart my sweet heart's enemy.

If I had many mighty men to friend,

I would not plead too lovingly with you

To have your love.

Darnley. Why, yet you have my love.

Queen. Alas! what shall mine enemies do to me

If I be used so hardly of my friends? Come, sir, you hate me; yet for all your hate

You cannot have such heart.

Darnley. What sort of heart?

I have not been to be used shamefully, If you mean that.

Queen. Would God I loved you not! You are too hard to be used lovingly.

Darnley. You are moved too much for such a little love

As you bear me.

Queen. God knows you do me wrong; God knows the heart, sweet, that I love you with.

Hark you, fair sir, I'd have all well with you;

Do you not fear at sick men's time of night

What end may come? are you so sure of heart?

Is not your spirit surprisable in sleep?

Have you no evil dreams? Nay, look you, love,

I will not be flung off your heart and hand,

I am no snake: but tell me for your love, Have you no fancies how these things

will end

In the pit's mouth? how all life-deeds will look

At the grave's edge that lets men into hell?

For my part, who am weak and woman-eyed,

It turns my soul to tears: I doubt this blood

Fallen on our faces when we twain are dead

Will scar and burn them: yea, for heaven is sweet,

And loves sweet deeds that smell not of spilt blood.

Let us not kill: God that made mercy first

Pities the pitiful for their deed's sake.

Darnley. Get you some painting; with a cheek like this

You'll find no faith in listeners.

Queen. How, fair lord?

Darnley. I say that looking with this face of yours

None shall believe you holy. What! you talk,

Take mercy in your mouth, eat holiness,

Put God under your tongue, and feed on heaven,

With fear and faith and—faith, I know not what—

And look as though you stood and saw men slain

To make you game and laughter : nay,
 your eyes
 Threaten as unto blood. What will
 you do
 To make men take your sweet word?
 Pitiful —
 You are pitiful as he that's hired for
 death,
 And loves the slaying yet better than
 the hire.

Queen. You are wise that live to
 threat and tell me so :

Do you love life too much?

Darnley. Oh, now you are sweet,
 Right tender now : you love not blood
 nor death,
 You are too tender.

Queen. Yea, too weak, too soft :
 Sweet, do not mock me, for my love's
 sake ; see
 How soft a thing I am. Will you be
 hard?
 The heart you have, has it no sort of
 fear?

Darnley. Take off your hand, and let
 me go my way,
 And do my deed ; and when the doing
 is past
 I will come home, and teach you tender
 things
 Out of my love till you forget my
 wrath.

I will be angry when I see good need,
 And will grow gentle after, — fear not
 that ;
 You shall get no wrong of my wrong-
 doing.
 So I take leave.

Queen. Take what you will ; take all.
 You have taken half my heart away
 with words :
 Take all I have, and take no leave ; I
 have
 No leave to give : yea, shortly shall
 lack leave,
 I think, to live ; but I crave none of
 you ;
 I would have none : yet for the love I
 have,
 If I get ever a mean to show it you,
 I pray God put you some day in my
 hand
 That you may take that too.

Darnley. Well, as he please :
 God keep you in such love ; and so
 farewell. [*Exit.*]

Queen. So fare I as your lover, but
 not well. —

Ah, sweet, if God be ever good to me
 To put you in my hand ! I am come to
 shame ;

Let me think now, and let my wits not
 go ;

God, for dear mercy, let me not forget
 Why I should be so angry : the dull
 blood

Beats at my face, and blinds me ; I am
 chafed to death,

And I am shamed ; I shall go mad and
 die.

Truly I think I did kneel down, did
 pray,

Yea, weep (who knows?) it may be —
 all for that.

Yea, if I wept not, this was blood brake
 forth

And burnt mine eyelids ; I will have
 blood back,

And wash them cool in the hottest of
 his heart,

Or I will slay myself : I cannot tell.

I have given gold for brass, and lo, the
 pay

Cleaves to my fingers ; there's no way
 to mend, —

Not while life stays : would God that
 it were gone !

The fool will feed upon my fame, and
 laugh ;

Till one seal up his tongue and lips
 with blood,

He carries half my honor and good
 name

Between his teeth. Lord God, mine
 head will fail !

When have I done thus since I was
 alive?

And these ill times will deal but ill
 with me —

My old love slain, and never a new to
 help,

And my wits gone, and my blithe use
 of life,

And all the grace was with me. Love
 — perchance

If I save love I shall well save myself

I could find heart to bid him take such fellows,
And kill them to my hand. I was the fool

To sue to these, and shame myself: God knows

I was a queen born, I will hold their heads

Here in my hands for this. Which of you waits?

Enter MARY BEATON and MARY CARMICHAEL.

No maiden of them?—what, no more than this?

Mary Carmichael. Madam, the lady Seyton is gone forth;
She is ill at heart with watching.

Queen. Ay, at heart—
All girls must have such tender sides to the heart

They break for one night's watching, ache to death

For an hour's pity, for a half-hour's love—

Wear out before the watches, die by dawn,

And ride at noon to burial. God's my pity!

Where's Hamilton? doth she ail too? at heart,

I warrant her at heart.

Mary Beaton. I know not, madam.

Queen. What! sick or dead? I am well holpen of you:

Come hither to me. What pale blood you have!

Is it for fear you turn such cheeks to me?

Why, if I were so loving, by my hand, I would have set my head upon the chance,

And loosed him though I died. What will you do?

Have you no way?

Mary Beaton. None but your mercy.

Queen. Ay?
Why, then the thing is piteous. Think, for God's sake—

Is there no loving way to fetch him forth?

Nay, what a white thin-blooded thing is love,

To help no more than this doth! Were I in love,

I would unbar the ways to-night, and then

Laugh death to death to-morrow, mock him dead;

I think you love well with one half your heart,

And let fear keep the other. Hark you now:

You said there was some friend durst break my bars—

Some Scotch name—faith, as if I wist of it!

Ye have such heavy wits to help one with—

Some man that had some mean to save him by—

Tush, I must be at pains for you!

Mary Beaton. Nay, madam,
It were no boot; he will not be let forth.

Queen. I say, the name. Oh, Robert Erskine—yea,

A fellow of some heart: what saith he?

Mary Beaton. Madam,
The thing was sound all through, yea, all went well,

But for all prayers that we could make to him

He would not fly: we cannot get him forth.

Queen. Great God! that men should have such wits as this!

I have a mind to let him die for that;

And yet I wot not. Said he, he loathed his life?

Mary Beaton. He says your grace given would scathe yourself,

And little grace for such a grace as that

Be with the little of the life he kept To cast off some time more unworthily.

Queen. God help me! what should wise folk do with him?

These men be weaker-witted than mere fools

When they fall mad once; yet by Mary's soul

I am sorrier for him than for men right wise.

God wot a fool that were more wise than he

Would love me something worse than
Chastelard,
Ay, and his own soul better. Do you
think

(There's no such other sort of fool
alive)

That he may live?

Mary Beaton. Yea, by God's mercy,
madam,

To your great praise and honor from
all men

If you should keep him living.

Queen. By God's light,

I have good will to do it. Are you
sure,

If I would pack him with a pardon
hence,

He would speak well of me — not hint
and halt,

Smile and look back, sigh and say love
runs out,

But times have been — with some loose
laugh cut short,

Bit off at lip — eh?

Mary Beaton. No, by heaven he
would not!

Queen. You know how quickly one
may be belied —

Faith, you should know it; I never
thought the worst;

One may touch love, and come with
clean hands off —

But you should know it. What! he
will not fly —

Not though I wink myself asleep, turn
blind —

Which that I will I say not?

Mary Beaton. Nay, not he;

We had good hope to bring him well
aboard,

Let him slip safe down by the firths to
sea,

Out under Leith by night-setting, and
thence

Take ship for France, and serve there
out of sight

In the new wars.

Queen. Ay, in the new French wars —

You wist thereof too, madam, with good
leave —

A goodly bait to catch mine honor with
And let me wake up with my name bit
through.

I had been much bounden to you twain,
methinks,

But for my knight's sake and his love's;
by God,

He shall not die in God's despite nor
mine.

Call in our chief lords; bid one see to
it, —

Ay, and make haste.

[*Exeunt MARY BEATON and MARY
CARMICHAEL.*

Now shall I try their teeth:

I have done with fear; now nothing
but pure love

And power and pity shall have part in
me;

I will not throw them such a spirit in
flesh

To make their prey on. Though he be
mad indeed,

It is the goodliest madness ever
smote

Upon man's heart. A kingly knight —
in faith,

Meseems my face can yet make faith
in men,

And break their brains with beauty:
for a word,

An eyelid's twitch, an eye's turn, tie
them fast

And make their souls cleave to me.
God be thanked,

This air has not yet curdled all the
blood

That went to make me fair. An hour
agone,

I thought I had been forgotten of men's
love

More than dead women's faces are
forgot

Of after lovers. All men are not of
earth:

For all the frost of fools and this cold
land,

There be some yet catch fever of my
face

And burning for mine eyes' sake. I
did think

My time was gone when men would
dance to death

As to a music, and lie laughing down
In the grave and take their funerals for
their feasts,

To get one kiss of me. I have some strength yet,
 Though I lack power on men that lack men's blood.
 Yea, and God wot I will be merciful;
 For all the foolish hardness round my heart
 That tender women miss of to their praise,
 They shall not say but I had grace to give
 Even for love's sake. Why, let them take their way:
 What ails it them though I be soft or hard?
 Soft hearts would weep and weep, and let men die
 For very mercy and sweet-heartedness;
 I that weep little for my pity's sake,
 I have the grace to save men. Let fame go —
 I care not much what shall become of fame,
 So I save love, and do mine own soul right;
 I'll have my mercy help me to revenge
 On all the crew of them. How will he look,
 Having my pardon! I shall have sweet thanks
 And love of good men for my mercy's love, —
 Yea, and be quit of these I hate to death,
 With one good deed.

Enter the MARIES.

Mary Beaton. Madam, the lords are here.

Queen. Stand you about me, I will speak to them.

I would the whole world stood up in my face,
 And heard what I shall say. Bid them come in.

Enter MURRAY, RANDOLPH, MORTON, LINDSAY, and other Lords.

Hear you, fair lords, I have a word to you;

There is one thing I would fain understand, —

If I be queen, or no; for by my life
 Methinks I am growing unqueenly. No man speak?

Pray you take note, sweet lord ambassador,

I am no queen: I never was born queen.
 Alack, that one should fool us in this wise!

Take up my crown, sir, I will none of it
 Till it hath bells on as a fool's cap hath.
 Nay, who will have it? no man take it up?

Was there none worthy to be shamed but I?

Here are enow good faces, good to crown;

Will you be king, fair brother? or you, my lord?

Give me a spinner's curch, a wisp of reed,

Any mean thing; but, God's love, no more gold,

And no more shame: let boys throw dice for it,

Or cast it to the grooms for tennis-play,
 For I will none.

Murray. What would your highness have?

Queen. Yea, yea, I said I was no majesty;

I shall be shortly fallen out of grace.

What would I have? I would have leave to live;

Perchance I shall not shortly: nay, for me

That have no leave to respite other lives
 To keep mine own life were small praise enow.

Murray. Your majesty hath power to respite men,

As we well wot; no man saith otherwise.

Queen. What! is this true? 'tis a thing wonderful —

So great I cannot be well sure of it.

Strange that a queen should find such grace as this

At such lords' hands as ye be, — such great lords:

I pray you let me get assured agam,
 Lest I take jest for truth, and shame myself,

And make you mirth: to make your mirth of me,

God wot it were small pains to you, my lords,

But much less honor. I may send re-
prieve —

With your sweet leaves I may?

Murray. Assuredly.

Queen. Lo, now, what grace is this I
have of you!

I had a will to respite Chastelard,
And would not do it for very fear of
you:

Look you, I wist not ye were merciful.

Morton. Madam —

Queen. My lord, you have a word to
me?

Doth it displease you such a man should
live?

Morton. 'Twere a mad mercy in your
majesty

To lay no hand upon his second fault
And let him thrice offend you.

Queen. Ay, my lord?

Morton. It were well done to muffle
lewd men's mouths

By casting of his head into their laps:
It were much best.

Queen. Yea, truly were it so?

But if I will not, yet I will not, sir,
For all the mouths in Scotland. Now,
by heaven,

As I am pleased he shall not die, but
live,

So shall ye be. There is no man shall
die,

Except it please me; and no man shall
say,

Except it please me, if I do ill or well.

Which of you now will set his will to
mine?

Not you, nor you I think, nor none of
you,

Nor no man living that loves living well.
Let one stand forth and smite me with
his hand,

Wring my crown off and cast it under-
foot,

And he shall get my respite back of me,
And no man else: he shall bid live or
die,

And no man else; and he shall be my
lord,

And no man else. What! will not one
be king?

Will not one here lay hold upon my
state?

I am queen of you for all things come
and gone.

Nay, my chief lady, and no meaner
one,

The chiefest of my maidens, shall bear
this,

And give it to my prisoner for a grace.

Who shall deny me? who shall do me
wrong?

Bear greeting to the lord of Chastelard,
And this withal for respite of his life,

For by my head he shall die no such
way:

Nay, sweet, no words, but hence and
back again.

[Exit MARY BEATON.

Farewell, dear lords; ye have shown
grace to me,

And some time I will thank you as I
may;

Till when, think well of me and what is
done.

ACT V.—CHASTELARD.

SCENE I.—*Before Holyrood. A crowd
of people; among them Soldiers, Bur-
gesses, a Preacher, etc.*

First Citizen. They are not out yet.

Have you seen the man?

What manner of man?

Second Citizen. Shall he be hanged,
or no?

There was a fellow hanged some three
days gone,

Wept the whole way: think you this
man shall die

In better sort, now?

First Citizen. Eh, these shawm-players
That walk before strange women, and
make songs!

How should they die well?

Third Citizen. Is it sooth men say
Our dame was wont to kiss him on the
face

In lewd folk's sight?

First Citizen. Yea, saith one, all day
long

He used to sit and jangle words in
rhyme

To suit with shakes of faint adulterous
sound

Some French lust in men's ears; she
made songs too,
Soft things to feed sin's anorous mouth
upon, —

Delicate sounds for dancing at in hell.

Fourth Citizen. Is it priest Black that
he shall have by him

When they do come?

Third Citizen. Ah! by God's leave,
not so;

If the knave show us his peeled onion's
head

And that damned flagging jowl of his —

Second Citizen. Nay, sirs,

Take heed of words; moreover, please
it you,

This man hath no pope's part in him.

Third Citizen. I say

That if priest whore's-friend with the
lewd thief's cheek

Show his foul blinking face to shame
all ours,

It goes back fouler; well, one day hell's
fire

Will burn him black indeed.

A Woman. What kind of man?

'Tis yet great pity of him if he be
Goodly enow for this queen's paramour.
A French lord overseas? what doth he
here,

With Scotch folk here?

First Citizen. Fair mistress, I think
well,

He doth so at some times that I were
fain

To do as well.

The Woman. Nay, then he will not
die.

First Citizen. Why, see you, if one
eat a piece of bread

Baked as it were a certain prophet's
way,

Not upon coals, now — you shall appre-
hend —

If defiled bread be given a man to eat,
Being thrust into his mouth, why he
shall eat,

And with good hap shall eat; but if
now, say,

One steal this, bread and beastliness
and all,

When scarcely for pure hunger flesh
and bone

Cleave one to other — why, if he steal
to eat,

Be it even the filthiest feeding — though
the man

Be famine-flayed of flesh and skin, I say
He shall be hanged.

Third Citizen. Nay, stolen said you,
sir?

See, God bade eat abominable bread,
And freely was it eaten — for a sign

This, for a sign — and doubtless as did
God,

So may the devil; bid one eat freely
and live,

Not for a sign.

Second Citizen. Will you think thus
of her?

But wherefore should they get this fel-
low slain

If he be clear toward her?

Third Citizen. Sir, one must see

The day comes when a woman sheds
her sin

As a bird moults; and she being shifted
so,

The old mate of her old feather pecks
at her

To get the right bird back; then she
being stronger

Picks out his eyes — ch?

Second Citizen. Like enough to be;

But if it be — Is not one preaching
there

With certain folk about him?

First Citizen. Yea, the same

Who preached a month since from Eze-
kiel

Concerning these twain, — this our
queen that is,

And her that was, and is not now so
much

As queen over hell's worm.

Third Citizen. Ay, said he not,

This was Aholah, the first one of these,
Called sisters only for a type — being
twain,

Twain Maries, no whit Nazarene? the
first

Bred out of Egypt like the water-worm
With sides in wet green places baked
with slime

And festered flesh that steams against
the sun:

A plague among all people, and a type
Set as a flake upon a leper's fell.

First Citizen. Yea, said he, and unto
her the men went in,
The men of Pharaoh's, beautiful with
red
And with red gold, fair foreign-footed
men,
The bountiful fair men, the courteous
men,
The delicate men with delicate feet, that
went
Curling their small beards Agag-fashion,
yea,
Pruning their mouths to nibble words
behind
With pecking at God's skirts—small
broken oaths
Fretted to shreds between most dainty
lips,
And underbreath some praise of Ash-
taroth
Sighed laughingly.

Second Citizen. Was he not under
guard
For the good word?

First Citizen. Yea, but now forth
again—
And of the latter said he—there being
two,

The first Aholah, which interpreted—
Third Citizen. But, of this latter?

First Citizen. Well, of her he said
How she made letters for Chaldean
folk

And men that came forth of the wilder-
ness

And all her sister's chosen men; yea,
she

Kept not her lip from any sin of
hers,

But multiplied in whoredoms toward
all these

That hate God mightily; for these, he
saith,

These are the fair French people, and
these her kin

Sought out of England with her love-
letters

To bring them to her kiss of love; and
thus

With a prayer made that God would
break such love

Ended some while; then crying out for
strong wrath

Spake with a great voice after: This is
she,

Yea the lewd woman, yea the same
woman

That gat bruised breasts in Egypt, when
strange men

Swart from great suns, foot-burnt with
angry soils,

And strewn with sand of gaunt Chal-
dæan miles,

Poured all their love upon her: she
shall drink

The Lord's cup of derision that is
filled

With drunkenness and sorrow, great of
sides

And deep to drink in till the dreg drips
out:

Yea, and herself with the twain shards
thereof

Pluck off her breasts; so said he.

Fourth Citizen. See that stir—
Are not they come?

Third Citizen. There wants an hour
of them.

Draw near, and let us hearken; he will
speak

Surely some word of this.

Second Citizen. What saith he now?

The Preacher. The mercy of a harlot
is a sword,

And her mouth sharper than a flame of
fire.

SCENE II.—*In Prison.*

Chastelard. So here my time shuts
up; and the last light

Has made the last shade in the world
for me.

The sunbeam that was narrow like a
leaf

Has turned a hand, and the hand
stretched to an arm,

And the arm has reached the dust on
the floor, and made

A maze of motes with paddling fingers.

Well,
I knew not that a man so sure to die

Could care so little; a bride-night's
lustiness

Leaps in my veins as light fire under a
wind:

As if I felt a kindling beyond death
Of some new joys far outside of me
yet;

Sweet sound, sweet smell and touch of
things far out

Sure to come soon. I wonder will
death be

Even all it seems now? or the talk of
hell

And wretched changes of the worn-out
soul

Nailed to decaying flesh, shall that be
true?

Or is this like the forethought of deep
sleep

Felt by a tired man? Sleep were good
enough—

Shall sleep be all? But I shall not for-
get

For any sleep this love bound upon
me—

For any sleep or quiet ways of death.
Ah! in my weary dusty space of sight

Her face will float with heavy scents of
hair

And fire of subtle amorous eyes, and
lips

More hot than wine, full of sweet
wicked words

Babbled against mine own lips, and
long hands

Spread out, and pale bright throat and
pale bright breasts,

Fit to make all men mad. I do believe
This fire shall never quite burn out to

the ash,
And leave no heat and flame upon my

dust
For witness where a man's heart was

burnt up.
For all Christ's work this Venus is not

quelled,
But reddens at the mouth with blood of

men,
Sucking between small teeth the sap o'

the veins,
Dabbling with death her little tender

lips—
A bitter beauty, poisonous-pearled

mouth.
I am not fit to live but for love's sake,

So I were best die shortly. Ah! fair
love,

Fair fearful Venus made of deadly
foam,

I shall escape you somehow with my
death,—

Your splendid supple body and mouth
on fire,

And Paphian breath that bites the lips
with heat.

I had best die.

Enter MARY BEATON.

What! is my death's time come,
And you the friend to make death kind

to me?

'Tis sweetly done; for I was sick for
this.

Mary Beaton. Nay, but see here;
nay, for you shall not die:

She has reprieved you; look, her name
to that,

A present respite; I was sure of her:
You are quite safe: here, take it in your

hands:
I am faint with the end of pain. Read

there.

Chastelard. Reprieve?

Wherefore reprieve? Who has done
this to me?

Mary Beaton. I never feared but God
would have you live,

Or I knew well God must have punished
me;

But I feared nothing, had no sort of fear.
What makes you stare upon the seal so

hard?

Will you not read now?

Chastelard. A reprieve of life—

Reprieving me from living. Nay, by
God,

I count one death a bitter thing enough.

Mary Beaton. See what she writes;
your love: for love of you;

Out of her love; a word to save your
life:

But I knew this too though you love me
not:

She is your love; I knew that: yea, by
heaven.

Chastelard. You knew I had to live
and be reprieved:

Say I were bent to die now?

Mary Beaton. Do not die,

For her sweet love's sake ; not for pity
of me,
You would not bear with life for me
one hour ;
But for hers only.

Chastelard. Nay, I love you well,
I would not hurt you for more lives
than one.

But for this fair-faced paper of reprieve,
We'll have no riddling to make death
shift sides :

Look, here ends one of us. [*Tearing it.*

For her I love,
She will not anger heaven with slaying
me ;

For me, I am well quit of loving her ;
For you, I pray you be well comforted,
Seeing in my life no man gat good by
me,

And by my death no hurt is any man's.

Mary Beaton. And I that loved you ?
nay, I loved you ; nay,
Why should your like be pitied when
they love ?

Her hard heart is not yet so hard as
yours,

Nor God's hard heart. I care not if
you die.

These bitter madmen are not fit to live.
I will not have you touch me, speak to
me,

Nor take farewell of you. See you die
well,

Or death will play with shame for you,
and win,

And laugh you out of life. I am right
glad

I never am to see you any more,
For I should come to hate you easily ;

I would not have you live. [*Exit.*

Chastelard. She has cause enow.

I would this wretched waiting had an
end,

For I wax feeblér than I was : God
knows

I had a mind once to have saved this
flesh,

And made life one with shame. It
marvels me

This girl that loves me should desire so
much

To have me sleep with shame for bed-
fellow

A whole life's space ; she would be glad
to die

To escape such life. It may be, too, her
love

Is but an amorous quarrel with herself,
Not love of me, but her own wilful soul :

Then she will live, and be more glad of
this

Than girls of their own will and their
heart's love

Before love mars them : so God go with
her !

For mine own love — I wonder will she
come

Sad at her mouth a little, with drawn
cheeks

And eyelids wrinkled up ? or hot and
quick

To lean her head on mine and leave her
lips

Deep in my neck ? For surely she
must come ;

And I should fare the better to be sure
What she will do. But as it please
my sweet ;

For some sweet thing she must do if
she come,

Seeing how I have to die. Now three
years since,

This had not seemed so good an end
for me ;

But in some wise all things wear round
betimes,

And wind up well. Yet doubtless she
might take

A will to come my way, and hold my
hands,

And kiss me some three kisses, throat,
mouth, eyes,

And say some soft three words to soften
death :

I do not see how this should break her
ease.

Nay, she will come to get her warrant
back :

By this no doubt she is sorely penitent,
Her fit of angry mercy well blown out,

And her wits cool again. She must
have chafed

A great while through for anger to be-
come

So like pure pity ; they must have fret-
ted her

Nigh mad for anger: or it may be mistrust,

She is so false; yea, to my death I think

She will not trust me; alas the hard sweet heart!

As if my lips could hurt her any way
But by too keenly kissing of her own!

Ah! false poor sweet fair lips that keep
no faith,

They shall not catch mine false or dangerous;

They must needs kiss me one good time,
albeit

They love me not at all. Lo, here she comes,

For the blood leaps and catches at my face;

There go her feet, and tread upon my heart;

Now shall I see what way I am to die.

Enter the QUEEN.

Queen. What! is one here? Speak to me, for God's sake:

Where are you lain?

Chastelard. Here, madam, at your hand.

Queen. Sweet lord, what sore pain have I had for you,

And been most patient! — Nay, you are not bound.

If you be gentle to me, take my hand.
Do you not hold me the worst heart in the world?

Nay, you must needs; but say not yet you do.

I am worn so weak, I know not how I live:

Reach me your hand.

Chastelard. Take comfort and good heart;

All will find end; this is some grief to you,

But you shall overlive it. Come, fair love;

Be of fair cheer: I say you have done no wrong.

Queen. I will not be of cheer: I have done a thing

That will turn fire and burn me. Tell me not;

If you will do me comfort, whet your sword.

But if you hate me, tell me of soft things,

For I hate these, and bitterly. Look up;

Am I not mortal to be gazed upon?

Chastelard. Yea, mortal, and not hateful.

Queen. O lost heart!

Give me some mean to die by.

Chastelard. Sweet, enough.

You have made no fault; life is not worth a world,

That you should weep to take it: would mine were,

And I might give you a world-worthier gift

Than one poor head that love has made a spoil;

Take it for jest, and weep not: let me go,

And think I died of chance or malady.

Nay, I die well; one dies not best abed.

Queen. My warrant to relieve you — that you saw?

That came between your hands?

Chastelard. Yea, not long since.

It seems you have no will to let me die.

Queen. Alas! you know I wrote it with my heart,

Out of pure love; and since you were in bonds,

I have had such grief for love's sake and my heart's, —

Yea, by my life I have, — I could not choose

But give love way a little. Take my hand;

You know it would have pricked my heart's blood out

To write relieve with.

Chastelard. Sweet, your hands are kind;

Lay them about my neck, upon my face,
And tell me not of writing.

Queen. Nay, by heaven,

I would have given you mine own blood to drink

If that could heal you of your soul-sickness.

Yea, they know that, they curse me for your sake,

Rail at my love — Would God their heads were lopped,

And we twain left together this side death!

But look you, sweet, if this my warrant hold

You are but dead and shamed; for you must die,

And they will slay you shamefully by force

Even in my sight.

Chastelard. Faith, I think so they will.

Queen. Nay, they would slay me too, cast stones at me,

Drag me alive; they have eaten poisonous words,

They are mad, and have no shame.

Chastelard. Ay, like enough.

Queen. Would God my heart were greater! but God wot

I have no heart to bear with fear, and die.

Yea, and I cannot help you: or I know

I should be nobler, bear a better heart: But as this stands — I pray you for good

love,

As you hold honor a costlier thing than life —

Chastelard. Well?

Queen. Nay, I would not be denied for shame;

In brief, I pray you give me that again.

Chastelard. What, my reprieve?

Queen. Even so; deny me not,

For your sake mainly: yea, by God you know

How fain I were to die in your death's stead.

For your name's sake. This were no need to swear.

Lest we be mocked to death with a reprieve,

And so both die, being shamed. What! shall I swear?

What, if I kiss you? must I pluck it out?

You do not love me: no, nor honor. Come,

I know you have it about you: give it me.

Chastelard. I cannot yield you such a thing again;

Not as I had it.

Queen. A coward? what shift now? Do such men make such cravens?

Chastelard. Chide me not:

Pity me that I cannot help my heart.

Queen. Heaven mend mine eyes that took you for a man!

What, is it sewn into your flesh? take heed —

Nay, but for shame — what have you done with it?

Chastelard. Why, there it lies, torn up.

Queen. God help me, sir!

Have you done this?

Chastelard. Yea, sweet; what should I do?

Did I not know you to the bone, my sweet?

God speed you well! you have a goodly lord.

Queen. My love, sweet love, you are more fair than he,

Yea, fairer many times: I love you much,

Sir, know you that?

Chastelard. I think I know that well.

Sit here a little till I feel you through

In all my breath and blood for some sweet while.

O gracious body that mine arms have had,

And hair my face has felt on it! grave eyes,

And low thick lids that keep since years ago

In the blue sweet of each particular vein

Some special print of me! I am right glad

That I must never feel a bitterer thing

Than your soft curled-up shoulder and amorous arms

From this time forth; nothing can hap to me

Less good than this for all my whole life through.

I would not have some new pain after this

Come spoil the savor. Oh, your round bird's throat,

More soft than sleep or singing; your calm cheeks,

Turned bright, turned wan with kisses hard and hot;

The beautiful color of your deep curved
 hands,
 Made of a red rose that had changed to
 white;
 That mouth mine own holds half the
 sweetness of,
 Yea, my heart holds the sweetness of
 it, whence
 My life began in me,—mine that ends
 here
 Because you have no mercy; nay, you
 know
 You never could have mercy. My fair
 love,
 Kiss me again, God loves you not the
 less;
 Why should one woman have all goodly
 things?
 You have all beauty; let mean women's
 lips
 Be pitiful, and speak truth: they will
 not be
 Such perfect things as yours. Be not
 ashamed
 That hands not made like these that
 snare men's souls
 Should do men good, give alms, relieve
 men's pain:
 You have the better, being more fair
 than they;
 They are half foul, being rather good
 than fair;
 You are quite fair: to be quite fair is
 best.
 Why, two nights hence I dreamed that
 I could see
 In through your bosom, under the left
 flower,
 And there was a round hollow, and at
 heart
 A little red snake sitting, without spot,
 That bit—like this, and sucked up
 sweet—like this,
 And curled its lithe light body right
 and left,
 And quivered like a woman in act to
 love.
 Then there was some low fluttered talk
 i' the lips,
 Faint sound of soft fierce words caress-
 ing them—
 Like a fair woman's when her love gets
 way.

Ah! your old kiss—I know the ways
 of it:
 Let the lips cling a little. Take them
 off.
 And speak some word, or I go mad
 with love.
Queen. Will you not have my chap-
 lain come to you?
Chastelard. Some better thing of
 yours,—some handkerchief,
 Some fringe of scarf to make confes-
 sion to.
 You had some book about you that fell
 out—
Queen. A little written book of Ron-
 sard's rhymes,
 His gift, I wear in there for love of
 him—
 See, here between our feet.
Chastelard. Ay, my old lord's,—
 The sweet chief poet, my dear friend
 long since?
 Give me the book. Lo you, this verse
 of his:
*With coming lilies in late April came
 Her body, fashioned whiter for their
 shame;
 And roses, touched with blood since Adon
 bled,
 From her fair color filled their lips with
 red:*
 A goodly praise: I could not praise
 you so.
 I read that while your marriage-feast
 went on.
 Leave me this book, I pray you: I
 would read
 The hymn of death here over ere I
 die;
 I shall know soon how much he knew
 of death
 When that was written. One thing I
 know now:
 I shall not die with half a heart at
 least,
 Nor shift my face, nor weep my fault
 alive;
 Nor swear, if I might live, and do new
 deeds,
 I would do better. Let me keep the
 book.
Queen. Yea, keep it: as would God
 you had kept your life

Out of mine eyes and hands! I am
wrung to the heart.

This hour feels dry and bitter in my
mouth,

As if its sorrow were my body's food
More than my soul's. There are bad
thoughts in me,—

Most bitter fancies biting me like birds
That tear each other. Suppose you
need not die?

Chastelard. You know I cannot live
for two hours more.

Our fate was made thus ere our days
were made:

Will you fight fortune for so small a
grief?

But for one thing I were full fain of
death.

Queen. What thing is that?

Chastelard. None need to name the
thing.

Why, what can death do with me fit to
fear?

For if I sleep I shall not weep awake;
Or, if their saying be true of things to
come,

Though hell be sharp, in the worst ache
of it

I shall be eased, so God will give me
back

Sometimes one golden gracious sight
of you—

The aureole woven flower-like through
your hair,

And in your lips the little laugh as red
As when it came upon a kiss and ceased,
Touching my mouth.

Queen. As I do now, this way;

With my heart after: would I could
shed tears!

Tears should not fail when the heart
shudders so.

But your bad thought?

Chastelard. Well, such a thought as
this:

It may be, long time after I am dead,
For all you are, you may see bitter
days;

God may forget you, or be wroth with
you:

Then shall you lack a little help of me,
And I shall feel your sorrow touching
you,

A happy sorrow, though I may not
touch,—

I that would fain be turned to flesh
again,

Fain get back life to give up life for
you,

To shed my blood for help, that long
ago

You shed and were not holpen; and
your heart

Will ache for help and comfort, yea for
love,

And find less love than mine—for I do
think

You never will be loved thus in your
life.

Queen. It may be man will never love
me more;

For I am sure I shall not love man
twice.

Chastelard. I know not: men must
love you in life's spite;

For you will always kill them; man by
man

Your lips will bite them dead; yea,
though you would,

You shall not spare one; all will die of
you;

I cannot tell what love shall do with
these,

But I for all my love shall have no might
To help you more, mine arms and hands

To fasten on you more. This cleaves
my heart,

That they shall never touch your body
more.

But for your grief—you will not have
to grieve;

For being in such poor eyes so beauti-
ful

It must needs be as God is more than I
So much more love he hath of you than
mine;

Yea, God shall not be bitter with my
love,

Seeing she is so sweet.

Queen. Ah! my sweet fool,

Think you, when God will ruin me for
sin,

My face of color shall prevail so much
With him, so soften the toothed iron's
edge

To save my throat a scar? nay, I am
sure

I shall die somehow sadly.

Chastelard. This is pure grief;
The shadow of your pity for my death,
Mere foolishness of pity: all sweet
moods

Throw out such little shadows of them-
selves,

Leave such light fears behind. You,
die like me?

Stretch your throat out that I may kiss
all round

Where mine shall be cut through: sup-
pose my mouth

The axe-edge to bite so sweet a throat
in twain

With bitter iron, should not it turn soft
As lip is soft to lip?

Queen. I am quite sure
I shall die sadly some day, Chastelard;
I am quite certain.

Chastelard. Do not think such things;
Lest all my next world's memories of
you be

As heavy as this thought.

Queen. I will not grieve you;
Forgive me that my thoughts were sick
with grief.

What can I do to give you ease at
heart?

Shall I kiss now? I pray you, have no
fear

But that I love you.

Chastelard. Turn your face to me;
I do not grudge your face this death of
mine;

It is too fair—by God, you are too
fair.

What noise is that?

Queen. Can the hour be through so
soon?

I bade them give me but a little hour.

Ah! I do love you! such brief space
for love!

I am yours all through, do all your will
with me;

What if we lay and let them take us
fast,

Lips grasping lips? I dare do any
thing.

Chastelard. Show better cheer: let no
man see you mazed;

Make haste and kiss me cover up
your throat,
Lest one see tumbled lace, and prate
of it.

Enter the Guard: MURRAY, DARNLEY,
MARY HAMILTON, MARY BEATON,
and others with them,

Darnley. Sirs, do your charge; let
him not have much time.

Mary Hamilton. Peace, lest you chafe
the queen: look, her brows bend

Chastelard. Lords, and all you come
hither for my sake;

If while my life was with me like a
friend

That I must now forget the friendship
of,

I have done a wrong to any man of you,
As it may be by fault of mine I have;
Of such an one I crave for courtesy

He will now cast it from his mind and
heed

Like a dead thing; considering my dead
fault

Worth no remembrance further than
my death.

This for his gentle honor and good-will
I do beseech him, doubting not to find
Such kindness if he be nobly made
And of his birth a courteous race of
man.

You, my lord James, if you have aught
toward me—

Or you, Lord Darnley—I dare fear no
jot,

Whate'er this be wherein you were
aggrieved,

But you will pardon all for gentleness.

Darnley. For my part—yea, well, if
the thing stand thus,

As you must die—one would not bear
folk hard—

And if the rest shall hold it honorable,
Why, I do pardon you.

Murray. Sir, in all things
We find no cause to speak of you but
well:

For all I see, save this your deadly
fault,

I hold you for a noble perfect man.

Chastelard. I thank you, fair lord, for
your nobleness.

You likewise, for the courtesy you have

I give you thanks, sir; and to all these lords

That have not heart to load me at my death.

Last, I beseech of the best queen of men,

And royallest fair lady in the world,
To pardon me my grievous mortal sin
Done in such great offence of her: for,
sirs,

If ever since I came between her eyes
She hath beheld me other than I am,
Or shown her honor other than it is,
Or, save in royal faultless courtesies,
Used me with favor; if by speech or
face,

By salutation or by tender eyes,
She hath made a way for my desire to
live,

Given ear to me or boldness to my
breath;

I pray God cast me forth before day
cease,

Even to the heaviest place there is in
hell.

Yea, if she be not stainless toward all
men,

I pray this axe that I shall die upon
May cut me off body and soul from
heaven.

Now for my soul's sake I dare pray to
you:

Forgive me, madam.

Queen. Yea, I do, fair sir:

With all my heart, in all I pardon
you.

Chastelard. God thank you for great
mercies. — Lords, set hence;

I am right loath to hold your patience
here;

I must not hold much longer any man's.
Bring me my way, and bid me fare well
forth.

[*As they pass out, the QUEEN stays*
MARY BEATON.

Queen. Hark hither, sweet. Get back
to Holyrood,

And take Carmichael with you: go
both up

In some chief window whence the
squares lie clear, —

Seem not to know what I shall do:
mark that, —

And watch how things fare under.
Have good cheer;

You do not think now I can let him
die?

Nay, this were shameful madness if you
did,

And I should hate you.

Mory Beaton. Pray you love me,
madam,

And swear you love me, and will let
me live,

That I may die the quicker.

Queen. Nay, sweet, see,
Nay, you shall see, this must not seem
devised;

I will take any man with me, and go;
Yea, for pure hate of them that hate
him: yea,

Lay hold upon the headsman, and bid
strike

Here on my neck; if they will have
him die,

Why, I will die too: queens have died
this way

For less things than his love is. Nay,
I know

They want no blood; I will bring swords
to boot

For dear love's rescue though half earth
were slain;

What should men do with blood?
Stand fast at watch;

For I will be his ransom if I die.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *The Upper Chamber in
Holyrood.*

MARY BEATON seated: MARY CARMICHAEL at a window.

Mary Beaton. Do you see nothing?

Mary Carmichael. Nay, but swarms
of men

And talking women gathered in small
space,

Flapping their gowns and gaping with
fools' eyes;

And a thin ring round one that seems
to speak,

Holding his hands out eagerly: no
more.

Mary Beaton. Why, I hear more: I
hear men shout *The queen!*

Mary Carmichael. Nay, no cries yet.

Mary Beaton. Ah! they will cry out soon

When she comes forth; they should cry out on her:

I hear their crying in my heart. Nay, sweet,

Do not you hate her? All men, if God please,

Shall hate her one day; yea, one day, no doubt,

I shall worse hate her.

Mary Carmichael. Pray you, be at peace;

You hurt yourself: she will be merciful; What! could you see a true man slain for you?

I think I could not; it is not like our hearts

To have such hard sides to them.

Mary Beaton. Oh, not you,

And I could nowise: there's some blood in her

That does not run to mercy as ours doth;

That fair face and the cursed heart in her

Made keener than a knife for manslaughtering

Can bear strange things.

Mary Carmichael. Peace, for the people come.

Ah! Murray, hooded over half his face With plucked-down hat, few folk about him, eyes

Like a man angered; Darnley after him,

Holding our Hamilton above her wrist, His mouth put near her hair to whisper with—

And she laughs softly, looking at his feet.

Mary Beaton. She will not live long; God hath given her

Few days and evil, full of hate and love, I see well now.

Mary Carmichael. Hark, there's their cry—*The queen!*

Fair life and long, and good days to the queen!

Mary Beaton. Yea, but God knows. I feel such patience here

As I were sure in a brief while to die.

Mary Carmichael. She bends and laughs a little, graciously,

And turns half, talking to I know not whom—

A big man with great shoulders; ah! the face,

You get his face now,—wide and dusky, yea,

The youth burnt out of it. A goodly man,

Thewed mightily and sunburnt to the bone;

Doubtless he was away in banishment, Or kept some march far off.

Mary Beaton. Still you see nothing?

Mary Carmichael. Yea, now they bring him forth with a great noise,

The folk all shouting, and men thrust about

Each way from him.

Mary Beaton. Ah! Lord God, bear with me,

Help me to bear a little with my love For thine own love, or give me some quick death.

Do not come down; I shall get strength again,

Only my breath fails. Looks he sad or blithe?

Not sad I doubt yet.

Mary Carmichael. Nay, not sad a whit,

But like a man who losing gold or lands Should lose a heavy sorrow; his face set,

The eyes not curious to the right or left, And reading in a book, his hands unbound,

With short fleet smiles. The whole place catches breath,

Looking at him; she seems at point to speak:

Now she lies back, and laughs, with her brows drawn

And her lips drawn too. Now they read his crime.

I see the laughter tightening her chin:

Why do you bend your body, and draw breath?

They will not slay him in her sight; I am sure

She will not have him slain.

Mary Beaton. Forth, and fear not :
I was just praying to myself — one word,
A prayer I have to say for her to God
If he will mind it.

Mary Carmichael. Now he looks her
side ;
Something he says, if one could hear
thus far :
She leans out, lengthening her throat
to hear,
And her eyes shining.

Mary Beaton. Ah ! I had no hope ;
Yea, thou God knowest that I had no
hope.
Let it end quickly.

Mary Carmichael. Now his eyes are
wide,
And his smile great ; and like another
smile
The blood fills all his face. Her cheek
and neck
Work fast and hard ; she must have
pardoned him,
He looks so merrily. Now he comes
forth
Out of that ring of people, and kneels
down ;
Ah ! how the helve and edge of the
great axe
Turn in the sunlight as the man shifts
hands !
It must be for a show : because she sits
And hardly moves her head this way ;
I see
Her chin and lifted lips. Now she
stands up,
Puts out her hand, and they fall mutter-
ing ;
Ah !

Mary Beaton. It is done now ?

Mary Carmichael. For God's love,
stay there !
Do not look out. Nay, he is dead by
this ;
But gather up yourself from off the floor.
Will she die too ? I shut mine eyes,
and heard —
Sweet, do not beat your face upon the
ground.
Nay, he is dead and slain.

Mary Beaton. What ! slain indeed ?
I knew he would be slain. Ay, through
the neck :

I knew one must be smitten through the
' neck,
To die so quick : if one were stabbed
to the heart,
He would die slower.

Mary Carmichael. Will you behold
him dead ?

Mary Beaton. Yea : must a dead man
not be looked upon
That living one was fain of ? give me
way.

Lo you, what sort of hair this fellow
had ;
The doomsman gathers it into his hand
To grasp the head by for all men to see :
I never did that.

Mary Carmichael. For God's love, let
me go !

Mary Beaton. I think sometimes she
must have held it so,
Holding his head back, see you, by the
hair,
To kiss his face, still lying in his arms.
Ay, go and weep : it must be pitiful
If one could see it. What is this they
say ?

So perish the queen's traitors ! Yea,
but so

Perish the queen ! — God, do thus much
to her

For his sake only : yea, for pity's sake
Do thus much with her.

Mary Carmichael. Prithee, come in
with me :

Nay, come at once.

Mary Beaton. If I should meet with
her,

And spit upon her at her coming in —
But if I live then shall I see one day
When God will smite her lying harlot's
mouth, —

Surely I shall. Come, I will go with
you ;

We will sit down together face to face
Now, and keep silence ; for this life is
hard,

And the end of it is quietness at last.

Come, let us go : here is no word to
say.

An usher. Make way there for the
lord of Bothwell ; room, —

Place for my lord of Bothwell next the
queen.

BOTHWELL: A TRAGEDY.

πολλα μὲν γὰρ τρέφει
 δεινα δειμάτων ἄχῃ,
 πόντια, τ' ἀγκάλαι κνωθάλων
 ἀνταίων βροτοῖσι
 πλαθούσι, βλαστούσι καὶ πεδαίχμιοι
 λαμπαῖς πεδαοροί,
 πατὰ τε καὶ πεδοβάμονα, κἀνεμοέντων
 αἰγίδων φράσαι κότον.

ἀλλ' ὑπέρτολμον ἀν-
 δρὸς φρόνημα τίς λέγοι,
 καὶ γυναικῶν φρεσὶν τλημόνων;
 καὶ παντόλους
 ἔρωτας ἀταῖσι συννόμους βροτῶν,
 ξυζύγους θ' ὁμαυλίας;
 θηλυκρατὴς ἀπέρωτος ἔρως παρανικᾷ
 κνωθάλων τε καὶ βροτῶν.

AESCH. *Cho.* 585-601.

A VICTOR HUGO.

COMME un fleuve qui donne à l'océan son âme,
 J'apporte au lieu sacré d'où le vers tonne et luit
 Mon drame épique et plein de tumulte et de
 flamme,
 Ou vibre un siècle éteint, où flotte un jour qui
 fuit.

Un peuple qui rugit sous les pieds d'une femme
 Passe, et son souffle emplît d'aube et d'ombre et
 de bruit

Un ciel âpre et guerrier qui luit comme une lame
 Sur l'avenir debout, sur le passé détruit.

Au fond des cieux hagards, par l'orage battue,
 Une figure d'ombre et d'étoiles vêtue
 Pleure et menace et brille en s'évanouissant;

Eclair d'amour qui blesse et de haine qui tue,
 Fleur éclosée au sommet du siècle éblouissant,
 Rose à tige épineuse et que rosigit le sang.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARY STUART.
 MARY BEATON.
 MARY SEYTON.
 MARY CARMICHAEL.
 JANE GORDON, *Countess of Bothwell.*
 JANET STUART, *Countess of Argyle.*
 MARGARET LADY DOUGLAS *of Lochleven.*
 LADY RERES.
 HENRY LORD DARNLEY, *King Consort.*
 JAMES HEBURN, *Earl of Bothwell.*
 JAMES STUART, *Earl of Murray.*
 JAMES DOUGLAS, *Earl of Morton.*
 WILLIAM MAITLAND *of Lethington, Secretary of State.*
 JOHN KNOX.
 DAVID RIZZIO.
 The Earls of HUNTLEY, ARGYLE, CAITHNESS,
 ROTHES, CASSILIS, ATHOL, and MAR.
 Lords HERKIES, LINDSAY, RUTHVEN, FLEM-
 ING, SEYTON, BOYD, OCHILTREE, HUME,
 AKBROATH, and MAXWELL.

The younger RUTHVEN.
 THE MASTER OF OCHILTREE, *son to Lord Ochiltree.*
 THE MASTER OF MAXWELL, *son to Lord Herries.*
 SIR JAMES MELVILLE.
 SIR ROBERT MELVILLE.
 SIR GEORGE DOUGLAS, *uncle to Darnley.*
 SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *of Lochleven.*
 GEORGE DOUGLAS, *his brother.*
 SIR WILLIAM KIRKALDY *of Grange.*
 LORD ROBERT STUART, *Abbot of St. Cross.*
 DU CROC, *Ambassador from France.*
 SIR NICHOLAS THROGMORTON, *Ambassador from England.*
 JOHN HAMILTON, *Archbishop of St. Andrews.*
 JOHN LESLIE, *Bishop of Ross.*
 ARTHUR ERSKINE, *Captain of the Guard.*
 ANTHONY STANDEN and STUART OF TRA-
 QUAIR, *Equerries.*

JOHN ERSKINE of *Dun*.
 ANDREW KER of *Fauldonside*.
 HENRY DRUMMOND of *Ricarton*.
 ARCHIBALD BEATON.
 JOHN HEPBURN of *Bolton*, ORMISTON, HAY of
Talla, *Conspirators with Bothwell*.
 CRAWFORD, NELSON, TAYLOR, *servants to*
Darnley.

NICHOLAS HUBERT, *surnamed PARIS, ser-*
vant to Bothwell.
 THE PROVOST OF EDINBURGH.
 ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, *steward to the Earl*
of Lennox.
Page and Girl attending on Lady Lochleven.
Burgesses, Citizens, Soldiers, Attendants,
etc.

TIME, MARCH 9, 1566, TO MAY 16, 1568.

ACT I.—DAVID RIZZIO.

SCENE I.—HOLYROOD.

Enter DARNLEY and MARY CARMICHAEL.

Darnley. But you will not believe me
 though you hear;
 You have no faith: you steef by sight,
 and see
 This fellow gilt and garnished with her
 grace
 Sit covered by the queen where lords
 stand bare,
 And jet before them lordlier; and the
 sight
 Makes firm your faith that in his hand
 and eye
 This land is but a harp to play upon,
 Whose strings may turn to serpents or
 to swords,
 To maim his hand or charm his eye to
 death.
 You have no faith to see this, or to
 read
 The sentence that ensuing shall write
 me king,
 And worth men's fears or faiths: lo!
 now you laugh,
 As though my hope were braggart, and
 myself
 A fool and mouthpiece of its foolish
 vaunt:
 You have no faith.

Mary Carmichael. I have no wit nor
 will
 To choose between St. David for my
 lord
 And sweet St. Henry.

Darnley. Nay, King David now,
 King David psalmist; but for all his
 song

I doubt he hath lost the old trick of
 touch he had
 Once in the sword-play.

Mary Carmichael. See you play not
 Saul,
 Who are something of his stature in
 our eyes,
 Much of his mighty presence; be it not
 said
 He hath snipt your skirts already.

Darnley. Who said that?
 Who speaks of me so, lies to the blood
 and bone,
 To the heart and soul lies. I am no
 king mayhap,—
 I do not say yet I shall die no
 king:

God knows that, and is wise,—but man
 I am,
 Look else, who love you—

Mary Carmichael. Sir, be king for
 me,
 It shall content my will to you-ward,
 seeing

I take you to be royal, and myself
 Honest.

Darnley. Why honest? what a gibe
 is this?

What make you of me?

Mary Carmichael. Yea, what should
 I make?

'Tis time I were on service.

Darnley. Oh, the queen's?
 She gets good service, excellent service
 done,
 And worthy servants hath she,—a lib-
 eral queen.
 Well, if you will.

[*Exit MARY CARMICHAEL.*
 I would the month were out.
 If earth were easier by just one less
 knave,

I might sleep well and laugh and walk
at ease,
With none to mate me.

Enter MORTON.

Ah! my good lord and friend,
I had somewhat I would say—but let
words be.

The man you know of, I would you
had made him safe;

I would have told you this much.

Morton. Sir, the earl
Murray being with us in the main thing
here,

Though he keep hand from the red
handiwork,

Shall enough help us.

Darnley. Let him know it not, then:
Let him stand by: he must not know
it. Why, well,

It is the more our honor: yet would
God

He, being not with us, were not any-
where,

But dead, sir, dead! I say, who hath
eyes to see

May see him dangerous to us, and mani-
fest.

Ye have no eyes who see not: for my
part,

I noted him at once. Sir, by this
light,

When I first saw him—and I have eyes
to see—

I knew what manner of meaning in his
face

Lay privy and folded up and sealed and
signed.

I would you lords had sight and heart
like mine:

He should not long live dangerous;
yet, God wot,

For my poor personal peril I would
match

This body against his better.

Morton. There's no need
Of iron words and matches here of
men,

Save this we meet upon; which being
played out

Leaves our hands full and henceforth
peaceable.

For the earl, he makes no part of men's
designs,

Nor would I have you keen to strive
with him

Who lies yet still, and is well liked of
men

That are well-willers to this common
state

And the open peace of the people.
Let him be;

Keep your heart here.

Darnley. Here is it fixed and set
With roots of iron. 'Tis more hono-
to us,

Being so more perilous, to have no help
Of popular hands and common friendli-
ness,

But our hearts helpful only. I am sure
of her,

That she suspects not,—I do surely
think:

But yet she is subtle and secret-souled
and wise,

Wise woman-fashion; look you, be not
caught

Through too much trust in what of her
is weak,—

In her light mind and mutability;
For subtlety lies close in her light wit,
And wisdom wantons in her wanton-
ness:

I know her, I know her; I have seen
her ere now, and am

Not all to learn in women.

Morton. I believe

Your grace hath grace with women as
with men,

And skill of sense alike in those and
these,

I doubt not; which is well and profit-
able.

For this, how shall she know it, except
you slip

And let her wring the truth out from
your hand,

Or kiss the truth out, hanging mouth
on mouth?

But if no pressure press from hand or
lip

The unripe truth, the fruit so soon so
red,

What can she to us, though doubting
help or harm,—

How, if she know not surely?

Darnley. So I say.

And we that do it, we do it for all men's
good,

For the main people's love, thankwor-
thily—

And this is matter of law we take in
hand,

Is it not, lawful? for the man is judged,
Doomed dead and damned by sentence,
in good deed,

Though not by scruple and show of
trial and test,

By clearer cause and purer policy—

We cannot stand toward any account-
able,

As for a slaughter, a treasonable shame,
To mark us red in the world's eyes?
no man

Can say our fame is blotted with his
blood,

No man, albeit he hate us, bring in
doubt,—

Woman or man,—our right, our abso-
lute law,

Giving us leave—nay, bidding us do
so?

So that we stand after the deed as now,
In no more danger or fear?

Morton. In less fear, you,

And much more honor; now it might
please you fear,

Being overborne of woman and fast
bound

With feminine shame and weakness;
the man's strength,

The sinew and nerve and spirit of roy-
alty,

Hers, and all power to use her power
on you

Hers, and all honor and pleasure of
high place

That should make sweet your lips and
bright your brows

Hers, and the mockery of 'mismarried
men

Yours.

Darnley. Nay, by God I said so;
why, I knew it:

I told you thus aforetime, did I not?

Morton. Truly and wisely; if this
content you thus,

He is even our king.

Darnley. Methinks he should be
king,

And I, God wot, content. Here came
a man

Some few days back, a goodly, a gentle-
man,

An honorable, that for king knave's be-
hoof

Was stript out of the better of all his
lands

As I of what was best part of my wife,
My place, and honor that grows up
with hers—

For of her love small fruit was left to
strip,

Few leaves for winter weather—but of
these,

These good things, am I stript as bare
as shame,

Even beggared as was this man. By
God's light,

It seems this is but justice, doth it not,
And I so gentle and temperate—as, by
God,

I was not nor I will not.

Morton. There's more need

That you seem resolutely temperate then,
And temperately be resolute, I say,

Till the hour to cast off temperance
and put on

Plain passion for the habit of your heart,
Which now it wears in darkness, and

by day
The cloak and hood of temperance.

But these fits

And gusts and starts of will and will
not, these

Blow you this side and that side till
men see

Too much, and trust too little.

Darnley. O sir, you are wise,

You are honorable, and a counsellor,
and my friend,

And I too light, too light—yet by this
light

I think I am worth more than your
counsel is

If I be worth this work here to be
done—

I think I am so much.

Morton. It may well be, sir,

And you much wiser; yet forbear your
wrath

If you would have it ready to your
hand.

Darnley. I will forbear nothing —
 nor nothing bear —
 Nor live by no man's bidding. This
 year through
 I have even been surfeited with wise
 men's breath
 And winds of wordy weather round
 mine ears, —
 Do this, spare that, walk thus, look
 otherwise,
 Hold your head kingly, or wisely bow
 your neck :
 A man might come to doubt himself no
 man,
 Being so long childlike handled. Now,
 look you.
 Look she, look God to it if I be not
 man !
 Now is my way swept, and my foot shod
 now,
 My wallet full now for the travelling day
 That I fare forth and forward, arrow
 straight,
 Girt for the goal, red battle-ripe at
 need —
 As need there is — you are sure — and
 utter need ?

Morton. Is my lord not sure ?

Darnley. Ay, as sure as you, —

Surer, maybe: the need is more of
 mine, —

This grazes your bare hand that grates
 my heart.

Your queen it is wrongs you, and me
 my wife.

Morton. You see that sure, too ?
 sharp sight, have you not ?

Darnley. I saw it, I first — I knew
 her — who knew her but I,

That swore, — at least, I swore to mine
 own soul,

Would not for shame's sake swear out
 wide to the world,

But in myself swore with my heart to
 hear, —

There was more in it, in all their com-
 merce, more

Than the mere music: he is warped,
 worn through,
 Bow-bent, uncomely in wholesome eyes
 that see
 Straight, seeing him crooked; but she
 seeing awry

Sees the man straight enough for para-
 mour.

This I saw, this I swore too — silently,
 Not loud but sure, till time should be
 to speak

Sword's language, no fool's jargon like
 his tongue,

But plain broad steel speech and intel-
 ligible,

Though not to the ear, Italian's be it or
 Scot's,

But to the very life intelligible,
 To the loosed soul, to the shed blood —
 for blood

There must be — one must slay him —
 you are sure — as I am ?

For I was sure of it always: while
 you said,

All you, 'twas council-stuff, state-handi-
 craft,

Cunning of card-play between here and
 there,

I knew 'twas this and more, sir; I kept
 sight,

Kept heed of her, what thing she was,
 what wife,

What manner of stateswoman and gov-
 ernness —

More than all you saw — did you see it
 or I ?

Morton. You saw first surely, and
 some one spoke first out —

You had eyes, he tongue — and both
 bear witness now

If this must be or not be.

Darnley. Death, is that ?
 I must kill — bid you kill him ?

Morton. Nowise, sir;

As little need of one as the other is
 here;

As little of either as no need at all.

Darnley. You doubt or hand or
 tongue, then, sir, of mine ?

I would not strike, if need were, or
 bid strike ?

Morton. Neither we doubt, nor nei-
 ther do we need —

Having you with us.

Darnley. 'Twas but so you meant ?
 I had else been angry — nay, half
 wroth I was —

Not as I took it — I had else been
 wroth indeed.

Morton. That had been grievous to me and perilous, This time of all times.

Darnley. Ay, you need me, ay;
I am somewhat now then, somewhat more than wont,
Who thus long have been nothing — but will be?

Well, so, I am with you. Shall he die — how soon?

To-day I had said, but haply not to-day —

There might fall somewhat, something slip awry,

In such swift work, ha? Then, what day? Perchance

'Twere better he died abed — or were there charms,

Spells — if himself though be not witch, drug-proof

'Tis like, and devil-witted, being a knave Born poisonous and bred sorcerous like his kind —

We have heard what manner of plague his south land spawns,

What sort of kith and kin to hell and him,

How subtle in starry riddles and earth's roots

The dog-leeches that kill your soul in you,

Or only body, or both, as Catherine please,

Mother that was to our Mary — have we not?

We must look to it, and closely look.

Morton. My lord,
Of so much being so sure, of this be too;
That surely and soon in some wise very sure

We are quit of him with God's help or without.

Darnley. Why, that were well. I hold you resolute;

I pray you stay so, and all is well enough.

We have talked our time out — you had all to say —

All the thing's carriage — and my mind to take,

Which with plain heart I have made you understand.

My mind is, he must die then: keep you there.

[Exit.

Morton. Had God but plagued Egypt with fools for flies,
His Jews had sped the quicker.

Enter MARY BEATON.

Is the queen risen, Lady?

Mary Beaton. Not yet. Was not the king with you?

I heard him high and shrill.

Morton. Ay, he was here,
If anywhere the king be. You are sad.

Mary Beaton. I am not blithe of bearing, I wot well,

But the word sad is sadder than I am.

Is he not vexed?

Morton. I have never seen him else,
Save when light-heartedness and loose-hung brain

Have made him proud and drunken: as of late

He has been but seldom. There's one sad at least;

If it be sad to hang the head apart,
Walk with brows drawn and eyes disquieted,

Speak sullen under breath, and shrug and swear,

If any move him, and then again fall dumb;

He has changed his fresher manner, and put off

What little grace made his ungracious youth

Fair in men's eyes a little; if this last,

He will not long last in men's lordship here,

Except by love and favor shown of the queen.

Mary Beaton. There he sits strong in surety; yet men say

He is discontent, disheartened, for distaste

Of the like love and favor shown of her

(Or not the like, yet too much near the like)

Toward Rizzio; but such men, seeing visionary,

Run wide in talk, and sleep with speech awake

And sight shut fast: are you not of my mind?

Morton. I am most of theirs whose
mind is most toward hers,
As whose should be most noble; but in
truth

Mine own is moved to hear her gra-
cious heart

Mismade of, her clear courtesies mis-
read,

Misliked her liking, her good will ma-
ligned.

Even of his mouth who owes life, breath,
and place,

Honor and title, even to that clear good
will

To that her grace, liking, and courtesy.

Mary Beaton. You mean our lord
and hers and king of Scots?

Morton. As kingly a king as master-
ful a lord,

And no less hers than ours; as strong
each way.

Mary Beaton. And he misreads so
much the queen's pure heart

As to mistake aloud her manner of
life,

And teach the world's broad open
popular ear

His graceless commentary on her mere
grace

And simple favor shown a simple
knave,

Her chamber-child, her varlet? a poor
man,

Stranger, skilled little in great men's
policies

—Which is strange too, seeing he
hath had some chance

To learn some tricks of courts and
embassies,

Being therein bred, and not so very a
fool

But one might teach him—yet no
doubt a man,

Save for such teaching, simple and in-
nocent;

Only what heart, what spirit and wit he
has,

Being hot and close as fire on the old
faith's side

And the French party's—if his wit
were great,

It might do more than simple service
soon,

Having her heart as 'twere by the ear
which leans

Still toward his saying or singing; but
ye know

There is no peril in him, and the king
More fool than he a knave.

Morton. Well, I know not;
My skill is small in tunes, yet I can tell
Discord between kings' ear and peo-
ple's tongue,

Which hearing as in spirit I forehear
Harsh future music in a state mistuned,
If such men lay but hand upon the
keys,

Touch ne'er so slight a string of policy
With ne'er so light a finger: I would
the queen,

For the dear faith I bear her, saw but
this,

Or that the lords were heavier-eyed to
see.

Mary Beaton. Are they so keen of
soul as of their sight,—

To slay wrong as to see wrong?

Morton. 'Faith, with us
The hand is matched against the eye for
speed;

And these no slower in stroke of sight
and sword

Than their sharp-sighted swift-souled
forefathers.

I say not this that you should gather
fear

Out of my saying to sow in the ear of
the queen;

But for truth's sake; and truly I do not
fear

That I have put fear in you, for you
seem

Not lightly fearful to me.

Mary Beaton. I would not be,
Where I might keep good heart and
open eye,

Nor blind nor fevered with foolhardi-
ness,

As here meseems I may keep; for I see
No hurt yet nor hurt's danger steer in
sight,

Save the mere daily danger of high-
raised heads

To be mis-spoken and mis-seen of men,
Which is not for high-seated hearts to
fear.

Morton. Her heart is high enough,
and yours as hers :
You shall do well to hold your courage
fast,
Keeping your wits awake ; whereof
myself
I make no doubt, howbeit men fear the
queen,
Having our bitter folk and faith to fight,
Out of sharp spirit and high-heartedness
May do such things for love's sake or
for wrath's
As fools for fear's sake : which were no
less harm
(Turning her wit and heart against her-
self)
Than to be coward or witless. Fare
you well :
I will not doubt but she is well advised.

[Exit.

Mary Beaton. He is but dead by this,
then. I did know it ;
And yet it strikes upon me sudden and
sharp,
As a thing unforethought on. It is
strange
To have one's foot as mine is on the
verge,
The narrowing threshold of a thing so
great,
To have within one's eyeshot the whole
way,
The perfect reach of fate from end to
end,
From life to life replying and death to
death
This is the first hour of the night, and I
The watcher of the first watch, by whose
lamp
The starless sky that grows toward birth
of stars
And the unlit earth and obscure air are
seen
Pale as the iamp's self yet not well
alight.
Yet by the light of my heart's fire, and
mind
Kindled, I see what fires of storm, what
flaws,
What windy meteors and cross-counter-
ing stars,
Shall be through all the watches to the
dawn

And bloodlike sunrise of the fire-eyed
day.

I am half content already ; and yet I
would

This watch were through.

*Enter the QUEEN, RIZZIO, and MARY
SEYTON.*

Queen. Nay, it is later, sure :

I am idle, I am idle, and flattered : you
say wrong,

To find my sloth some pardonable plea,
Which is not pardonable ; a perfect sin,
One writ among the sorest seven of
all ;

Enough to load the soul past penitence.
Am I not late indeed ? speak truth and
say.

Rizzio. To watchers the sun rises ever
late,

Though he keep time with summer ;
but your grace

Keeps earlier than the sun's time.

Queen. 'Tis but March,
And a scant spring, a sharp and starve-
ling year.

How bitter black the day grows ! one
would swear

The weather and earth were of this
people's faith,

And their heaven colored as their
thoughts of heaven,

Their light made of their love.

Rizzio. If it might please you
Look out, and lift up heart to summer-
ward,

There might be sun enough for seeing
and sense,

To light men's eyes at, and warm hands
withal.

Queen. I doubt the winter's white is
deeper dyed

And closer worn than I thought like to
be ;

This land of mine hath folded itself
round

With snow-cold, white, and leprous mis-
belief,

Till even the spirit is bitten, the blood
pinched,

And the heart winter-wounded ; these
starved slaves

That feed on frost, and suck the snows
for drink,

Hating the light for the heat's sake, love
the cold.

We want some hotter fire than summer
or sun

To burn their dead blood through, and
change their veins.

Rizzio. Madam, those fires are all but
ashen dust.

'Tis by the sun we have now to walk
warm.

If I had leave to give good counsel
tongue

And wisdom words to work with, I
would say,

Rather by favor and seasonable grace
Shall your sweet light of summer-speak-
ing looks

Melt the hard mould of earthen hearts,
and put

Spring into spirits of snow. Your hus-
band here,

Who was my friend before your lord,
being grown

Doubtful, and evil-eyed against him-
self,

With a thwart wit crossing all counsel,
turns

From us-ward to their close fierce inti-
macy

Who are bitterest of the faction against
faith,

And through their violent friendship has
become

His own and very enemy, being moved
Of mere loose heart to vex you. Now
there stands

On the other hand, in no wise bound to
him,

But as your rebel and his enemy
Cast forth condemned, one that called
home again

Might be a bond between the time and
you,

Tying the wild world tamer to your
hand,

And in your husband's hot and unreined
mouth

As bit and bridle against his wandering
will.

Queen. What name is his who shall
so strengthen me?

Rizzio. Your father gave him half a
brother's name.

Queen. I have no brother: a blood-
less traitor he is

Who was my father's bastard born. By
heaven,

I had rather have his head loose at my
foot

Than his tongue's counsel rounded in
mine ear

Rizzio. I would you had called him
out of banishment.

Queen. Thou art mad, thou art mad.
prate me no more of him.

Rizzio. He is wise, and we need wis-
dom; penitent,

And God, they say, loves most his peni-
tents;

Stout-hearted and well-minded toward
your grace,

As you shall work him, and beguizable
Now at your need if you but will he be,

And God he knows if there be need of
such.

Queen. No need, no need: I am
crowned of mine own heart,

And of mine own will weaponed; am I
queen

To have need of traitors' leave to live
by, and reign

By the God's grace of these? I will not
have it;

Toward God I swear there shall be no
such need.

Rizzio. Yet if there were no need,
less harm it were

To have him easily on your royal side
While the time serves that he may serve

you in,—

Less harm than none, and profit more
than less.

Queen. He is a misborn traitor and
heretic;

And of his own side baffled, a flat fool,
Who thought to have comfort of Eliza-
beth,

Large furtherance of my sweet-souled
sister's love,

Grace and sure aid of her good plighted
word,

Her honorable and precious plighted
word,

And secret seal to help him; as she
durst not,

Yea, she would fain and durst not.

Rizzio. Please you note —

Queen. It shall not please me; I say
 she hath made him kneel,
 (And this does please me indeed) hath
 seen him down,
 Seen him and spurned him kneeling
 from her foot,
 As my born traitor and subject. David,
 nay,
 But hath thy careful love not made thee
 mad,
 Whose counsel was my sword against
 him once?
 Why, thou wast sworn his slayer; and
 all that while
 He held up head against us, thy one
 word
 Bade strike him dead of all men.
 What! hast thou
 Fairly forgot his purpose, were I taken,
 To speed thee out of life? his secret
 bond,
 Sealed with himself in spirit, thou
 shouldst die?
 Wast thou not trothplight with that
 souless boy,
 Ere he might thee, to rid him out of
 life?
 Nay, and thou knowest how dear a
 cause I have,
 And thou, to slay him when the good
 chance comes,
 Which God make speedy toward us!
 by my hand,
 Too little and light to hold up his dead
 head,
 It was my hope to dip it in his life
 Made me ride iron-mailed, a soldieress,
 All those days through we drove them
 here and there,
 Eastward from Fife, and hither and
 forth again,
 And broken to the border; yea, all day
 I thought how worth his life it were to
 ride
 Within the shot-length of my saddlebow
 And try my poor and maiden soldier-
 ship.
 And now I am bidden, and you it is
 bid me,
 Reach my hand forth forgivingly and
 meek
 To strike with his for love and policy?

He is beaten and broken, without help
 of hope,
 Who was mine enemy ever, and ever I
 knew
 How much he was mine enemy; and
 now maimed,
 Wounded, unseated from his power of
 place,
 Shall I raise up again and strengthen
 him,
 Warm and bid up his cold and o'er-
 bled wounds
 With piteous cordials? nay, but when I
 do,
 May he have strength to wreak his will
 on me,
 And I be flung under his feet! be-
 side,
 He was your mocking-stock this short
 while since:
 You swore, men tell me, Daniot told it
 me, —
 Your ghostly man of counsel, — why, to
 him,
 He says, you swore the bastard should
 not bide
 With you in Scotland; it made anger
 at you,
 Put passion in their mouths who bear
 you hard,
 That you should threaten kinglike.
 Hath he moved you
 To change your heart and face toward
 him at once,
 Or do you mock, or are struck mad
 indeed,
 That now you turn to bid me cry him
 home,
 Make much of him and sing him to my
 side?
Rizzio. For all this, madam, if I be
 not mad,
 It were well done to do it. He is a
 man
 Well-loved, well-counselled, and though
 fast in faith,
 Yet howsoever in strong opinion bound,
 Not so much over-ridden of his own
 mind
 As to love no man for faith's single
 sake;
 No fire-brained preacher nor wild-witted
 knave,

But skilled and reared in state and
soldiership.
What doth it need you to misthink of
me?
Say it is but this jewel he sends me
here
That pleads his part before you; say I
am his
And not your servant, or not only of
you
Made and again unmakeable; 'tis truth,
He hath given me gifts to be his coun-
sel to you,
And I have taken, and here I plead his
part,
Seeing my life hangs upon your life,
and yours,
If it be full and even and fortunate
In spite of foes and fears and friends,
must hang
On his, unbound from these and bound
to you.
We have done ill, having so mighty
a match,
So large a wager on this turn of time,
To leave the stakes in hand of a lewd
boy,
A fool and thankless; and to save the
game
We must play privily, and hold secret
hands.
Queen. I will not have his hand upon
my part,
Though it were safe to sweep up gold
and all.
Rizzio. But till our side be strong;
then cast him off,
When he hath served to strengthen you
so much
You have no need of any strength of
his.
Bear with him but till time be, and we
touch
The heart of the hour that brings our
chance to catch
Hope by the flying hair, and to our
wheel
Bind fortune and wind-wavering maj-
esty,
To shift no more in the air of any
change,
But hang a steady star; then, when the
faith

Sits crowned in us that serve her, and
you hold
The triple-treasured kingdom in your
lap,
What shall forbid you set a sudden
foot
Where it may please you, on their
hearts or heads
That in their season were found service-
able,
And now are stones of stumbling?
Time shapes all:
And service he may do you, or else
offence,
Even as you handle this sharp point of
time,
To turn its edge this wary way or that;
And for the land and state, why, having
served,
He may be seasonably stript out of
these
When you would do some friend a
courtesy
Who has still been found secret and
Catholic,
A lantern's eye of counsel in close
dark,
While he did blind man's service; but
till then
Let him keep land and name, and all
he will,
And blindly serve to the blind end in
trust,
To wake a naked fool. That this may
be,
I am firm in faith, may it be but with
your will.
Queen. He will not help us beat his
own faith down;
He is no hawk to seel and then to un-
hood,
Fly at strange fowl, and pluck back
blind again.
Rizzio. Bethink you, madam, he only
of all his kind
Stood out against men hotter in heresy,
Spake down their speeches, overbore
Pope Knox,
Broke with his cardinal's college of
shrewd saints,
In your free faith's defence, that would
have barred you
From custom of religion; and I wot,

Save for his help, small help had found
my queen

From Huntley or Hamilton, her faith-
fellows,

Or any their co-worshippers with her.

Queen. Thou art ever saying them
wrong; they are stout and sure,
Even they that strove for honor's sake
with us:

Their one least fault I am minded to
forgive;

True friends in faith, my dear own
blood and kin,

No birthless bastards nor mistitled men.

It pleased me bid him into banish-
ment,

And shall not lightly please me bid him
back.

Rizzio. Yet some men banished for
no less a cause,

It has been known, you have loosed
from banishment

I tell you for true heart.

Queen. Nay, I well know it.

You are good and faithful to us, God
quit it you,

And well of us loved back; how much,
you know,

But more than is our fear of men's mis-
saying,

For me, I find no such foul faultiness

In the lord Bothwell but might well be

purged

After long trial of English prison-bands

And proof of loyal lips and close true
heart

Whereout no gaoler could pluck dan-
gerous speech,

And then with overpassing to and fro
The strait sea wide enough to wash
him white

'Twixt France and us: and all this jar-
ring year

You have seen with what a service, in
full field,

Oft in our need he hath served us; nor
was it

Such matter of treason and nowise par-
donable

To mix his wits with Arran's broken
brain

In their device to entrap mine hand
with his

For high state's sake and strong-winged
policy,

When he was matched with me in most
men's mouths,

And found not yet for changeling or
for fool.

But howsoever, it pleased me pardon
him;

And a stout spear for warden have I
won.

I have help myself in help of him, who
now

Hath with good works undone his dead
misdeeds,

And left their memory drowned in the
under sea

That swept them out and washed him
in again,

A man remade; and fail me whoso fails,
Him I hold fast my friend; but those

cast out

That rose up right between my will and
me

To make me thrall and bondslave to
their own,

Giving me prison and them swift banish-
ment

Whom I gave honor, and cast the crown
away,

And break the old natural heart of
royalty,

For foul faith's sake or craft of their
miscreed;

That smote with sword or speech
against all state,

Not through blind heat or stumbling
hardihood,

But hate of holiness and height of mind,
Hateful to kingly truth, haters of kings;

Them though I pardon I would not
take to trust,

Nor bind up their loose faith with my
belief,

For all assurances of all men born.
Besides, I hate him, singly.

Rizzio. I have said, and say:
Do you as time will turn it; time turns
all.

Queen. I do believe there is no man's
estate

So miserable, so very a helpless thing,
So trodden under and overborne, as
mine.

For first the man that I set up for lord,
 For master of mine and mate of only
 me,
 Have I perforce put forth of my shamed
 bed,
 And broken on his brows the kingless
 crown,
 Finding nor head for gold nor hand for
 steel
 Worth name of king or husband, but
 the throne
 Lordless, the heart of marriage hus-
 bandless,
 Through his foul follies; then in the
 utter world,
 In the extreme range and race of my
 whole life
 Through all changed times and places
 of its change,
 Having one friend, I find a foe of him
 To my true sense and soul and spirit of
 thought
 That keeps in peace the things of its
 own peace,
 Secret and surely: in faith, this frets
 my faith,
 Distunes me into discord with myself,
 That you should counsel me against my
 soul.
 I pray you, do not.
Rizzio. Nay, I will no more.
 But if you take not Murray again to
 trust
 At least in short sweet seeming for
 some while,
 So to subdue him as with his own right
 hand
 And all chief with him of his creed and
 crew,
 Then, cleaving to the old counsel, sud-
 denly
 Have him attainted, and being so
 brought in
 By summons as your traitor, with good
 speed
 Have off his head; let him not live to
 turn;
 Choose you sure tongues to doom him,
 hands to rid,
 And be his slaying his sentence; for
 the rest,
 Make to you friends Argyle and Cha-
 telherault

And such more temperate of their fac-
 tion found
 As may be servants to your pardoning
 hand
 If they be separable; but anyway
 In pardoning these, forgive not half his
 fault
 With half their pardon; cut no branch
 of his,
 But the root only; strike not but at
 heart
 When you strike him: he hath done
 and borne too much
 To live 'twixt that and this unrecon-
 ciled,
 Having on this hand his conspiracy,
 On that your proclamation; his head
 priced,
 His life coursed after with hot hound
 and horn,
 His wife thrust forth hard on her trav-
 ailing time,
 With body soft from pangs and deli-
 cate,
 To roam in winter-bound and roofless
 woods:
 These things not wholly with your
 grace wiped off,
 And washed with favor and fair-faced
 love away,
 Must work within him deadly and des-
 perate.
Queen. Now
 I find your counsel in you, no strange
 tongue,
 But the old stout speech and sure; and
 this same day
 Will I set hand to it. I have chosen
 the lords
 That shall attain in council these men
 fled,
 Of mortal treason; and some two hours
 hence
 My tongue through their strange lips
 shall speak him dead
 Who is only my heart's hated among
 men.
 I am gay of heart, light as a spring
 south-wind,
 To feed my soul with his foretasted
 death.
 You know the reason I have, you know
 the right

And he the danger of it, being no fool,
For fool he is not; I would he were
but fool.

Oh, I feel dancing motions in my feet,
And laughter moving merrily at my
lips,

Only to think him dead and hearsed; or
hanged—

That were the better. I could dance
down his life,

Sing my steps through, treading on his
dead neck,

For love of his dead body and cast-out
soul.

He shall talk of me to the worm of
hell,

Prate in death's ear, and with a speech-
less tongue,

Of my dead doings in days gone out.
Sweet lord,

David, my good friend and my chancel-
lor,

I thank you for your counsel.

Rizzio. May it be
Prosperously mine! but howsoever, I
think

It were not well, when this man is put
down,

Though Lethington be wily or Melville
wise,

To make your stay of any other man.

Queen. I would I had no state to
need no stay,

God witness me, I had rather be reborn,
And born a poor mean woman, and live
low

With harmless habit and poor purity
Down to my dull death-day, a shep-
herd's wife,

Than a queen clothed and crowned
with force and fear.

Rizzio. Are you so weary of crowns,
and would not be

Soon wearier waxen of sheepfolds?

Queen. 'Faith, who knows?

But I would not be weary, let that be
Part of my wish. I could be glad and
good,

Living so low, with little labors set,
And little sleeps and watches, night
and day

Falling and flowing as small waves in
low sea

From shine to shadow and back, and
out and in

Among the firths and reaches of low
life:

I would I were away and well. No
more,

For dear love talk no more of policy.

Let France and faith and envy and
England be,

And kingdom go, and people: I had
rather rest

Quiet for all my simple space of life,

With few friends' loves closing my life
days in,

And few things known, and grace of
humble ways,—

A loving little life of sweet small works.

Good faith, I was not made for other
life;

Nay, do you think it? I will not hear
thereof;

Let me hear music rather, as simple a
song,

If you have any, as these low thoughts
of mine,

Some lowly and old-world song of quiet
men.

Rizzio. Then is the time for love-
songs when the lip

Has no more leave to counsel; even so
be it;

I will sing simply, and no more counsel
you.

Queen. Be not unfriends; I have
made you wroth indeed,

Unknowing, and pray you even for my
no fault

Forgive, and give me music; I am
athirst

For sweet-tongued pardon only.

Rizzio. If this be harsh,
The pardon be for fault enforced of
mine.

*Love with shut wings, a little ungrown
love,*

*A blind lost love, alit on my shut heart,
As on an unblown rose an unfledged dove:*

*Feeble the flight as yet, feeble the flower.
And I said, Show me if sleep or love thou
art,*

*Or death or sorrow, or some obscure
power;*

Show me thyself, if thou be some such power,
If thou be god or spirit, sorrow or love,
That I may praise thee for the thing thou art.

And saying, I felt my soul a sudden flower

Full-fledged of petals, and thereon a dove
Sitting full-feathered, singing at my heart.

Yet the song's burden heavier on my heart

Than a man's burden laid on a child's power.

Surely most bitter of all sweet things thou art,

And sweetest thou of all things bitter, love;

And if a poppy or if a rose thy flower.
We know not, nor if thou be kite or dove.

But nightingale is none, nor any dove,
That sings so long nor is so hot of heart
For love of sorrow or sorrow of any love;
Nor all thy pain hath any or all thy power,

Nor any knows thee if bird or god thou art,

Or whether a thorn to think thee, or whether a flower.

But surely will I hold thee a glorious flower,

And thy tongue surely sweeter than the dove

Muttering in mid leaves from a fervent heart

Something divine of some exceeding love,
If thou being god out of a great god's power

Wilt make me also the glad thing thou art.

Will no man's mercy show me where thou art,

That I may bring thee of all my fruit and flower,

That with loud lips and with a molten heart

I may sing all thy praises, till the dove
That I desire to have within my power
Fly at my bidding to my bosom, love?

Clothed as with power of pinions, O my heart,

Fly like a dove, and seek one sovereign flower,

Whose thrall thou art, and sing for love of love.

Queen. It sings too southerly for this harsh north;

This were a song for summer-sleeping ears,

One to move dancing measures in men's feet

Red-shod with reek o' the vintage.
Who went there?

What! hear you not?

Mary Seyton. My lord of Bothwell's foot;

His tread rings iron, as to battle-ward.

Queen. Not his, it was not. See if it be indeed.

'Twas a good song. Something he had with me —

I thank you for your song — I know not what.

Let him come in. Sir, be with us to night —

I knew it was late indeed — at supper time.

Rizzio. Madam, till night I take my loyal leave.

God give you good of all things.

[Exit.

Queen. Doth he mock me?

I care not neither; I know not. Stay with us.

Enter BOTHWELL.

Good morrow, sir: we bade you, did we not?

Be with us after noon; 'tis not noon near,

And you are truer than your own word; and that,

'Tis a true man's and trusty.

Bothwell. True it should be;

Madam, if truth be true, and I your thrall,

And truth's for your sake.

Queen. I would know of you —

I know not what — something there was to know.

I would you were not warden — as in truth

I think to unmake you — of the marches there.

'Tis a fierce office. You have a royal sword,

At least a knightly; I would not see it hacked rough

In brawling border dangers.

Bothwell. Anywhere

Hand, hilt, and edge are yours, to turn and take,

Use or throw by; you know it.

Queen. I know it indeed.

I have not many hearts with me, and hold

Precious the hearts I have and the good hands.

Ladies, we have somewhat with our servant here

That needs no counsel and no ear of yours,

So gives you leave. [*Exeunt* MARIES.

I know not why they are gone;

I have nothing with you secret.

Bothwell. Yea, one thing;

You cannot help it; your face and speech and look

Are secret with me in my secret heart.

Queen. I know not that; I would I did know that.

'Tis yet not twelve days since I saw you wed

To my dear friend, and with what eye you know

Who would not, for all love that I might make

And suit to you, give ear to me, and be in mine own chapel at the holy mass

Made one with her; for all the feast we kept,

No jewel of mine bequeathed your wife might buy

Consent of you to take 'her wedded hand

After the church-rite of her faith and mine;

And how much love went with your policy,

I cannot tell; yet was my will content That you should wed her name and

house, to bring

The race of Gordon on our side again, And have its ruin rebuild'd and its

might

Restored to do us service; so you said, And so I thought I knew your mind to stand;

Being so fast bound to me, I need not doubt

She could but hold you by the hand, and I

That had you by the heart need grudge not that,

While time gave order, and expediency Required of us allowance; but in faith

I know not whether there be faith or no, Save in my heart, wherein I know too

sure

How little wisdom is to trust in man.

So comes it, as you see, for all my show,

I am ill at heart, and tired.

Bothwell. 'Tis your own blame.

Queen. Yea, now, what would you have me? I am yours to do it:

But you say nothing; yet you say too much.

My blame it is, my weary waste of breath,

My wretched hours and empty bloodless life,

My sleepy vigils and my starting sleeps, All by my fault — if it be fault to be

More than all men loving, all women true,

To hunger with the foodless heart of grief,

And wither with the tearless thirst of eyes,

To wander in weak thought through unsown fields,

Past unreaped sheaves of vision; to be blind,

Weak, sick and lame of spirit and poor of soul,

And to live loveless for love's bitter sake,

And have to food loathing, and shame for drink,

And see no cease or breach in my long life

Where these might end or die; my fault it is,

And I will kill my fault: for I that loved

Will live to love no living thing again.

Bothwell. As you will, then.

Queen. Nay, do not tread on me;
I am lying a worm out of your way,
and you

Turn back to bruise me. I am stricken
sore enough;

Do not worse wound me; I am hurt to
the heart.

You change and shift quicker than all
good things,

That all change quickly: I am fast, and
cannot change.

If you do hold me so, fast in your
heart,

You should not surely mock me.

Bothwell. I mock you not.

You are looser and lighter-tempered
than the wind,

And say I mock you: 'tis you mock
yourself,

And much more me that wot not of
your mind;

What would you have, and would not.

Queen. Nothing, I,
Nothing but peace, and shall not. By
my faith,

I think no man ever loved woman well.
You laugh, and thrust your lips up, but

'tis truth,—

This that I think, not your light lewd
man's thought,

But in my meaning it is bitter true.

By heaven, I have no heart for any on
earth,

Any man else, nor any matter of
man's,

But love of one man; nay, and never
had.

Bothwell. I do believe it, by myself I
do,

Who am even the self-same natured;
so I know it.

Queen. What heart have you to hurt
me? I am no fool

To hate you for your heat of natural
heart.

I know you have loved and love not all
alike,

But somewhat all; I hate you not for
that.

When have I made words of it? sought
out times

To wrangle with you? crossed you with
myself?

What have I said, what done, by saying
or deed

To vex you for my love's sake? and
have been

For my part faithful beyond reach of
faith,

Kingdomless queen, and wife unhus-
banded,

Till in you reigning I might reign and
rest.

I have kept my body, yea from wedded
bed,

And kept mine hand, yea from my
sceptre's weight,

That you might have me and my king-
dom whole:

What have these done to take you,
what to keep,

Worth one day's doing of mine yet?
Ah! you know,

For all the shape and show of things
without,

For all the marriage and the bodily
bond

And fleshly figure of community,

I have loved no man, man never hath
had me whole,

I am virgin toward you: O my love,
love, love,

This that is not yours in me I abhor,

I pray God for your sake it may be
false,

Foolish and foul: I would not have it
man,

Not manlike, and not mine, it shall not
be,

Being none of love's, and rootless in
my soul,

Not growing of my spirit but my blood;
I hate myself till it be born.

Bothwell. Ay, sweet,

You talk now loud of love; but ten
days since

Was I not bid love well your friend,
and be

True husband to her? what sweet-
tongued preacher then

Taught me how faith should best be
kept by change

Of passionate fear and pleasure and
bright pain

And all their strange sharp sweet so
licitudes

For such good gifts as wisdom gives
and takes

From hand to married hand of them
that wed?

Whose counsel was this wisdom? whose
command

This that set sorrow and silence as one
seal

On the shut lips of foolishness and love?

Queen. I bade you not be wise; or, if
I bade,

It was to be obeyed not.

Bothwell. Then indeed

I did obey not, who did foolishly

To do your bidding.

Queen. Mine? did I say, Go?

Did I say, Love her? did I say, Hate
me?

As you must hate to love her. Yea,
perchance

I said all this; I know not if I said;

But all this have you done; I know
that well.

Bothwell. Indeed I have done all this
if aught I have,

And loved at all or loathed, save what
mine eye

Hath ever loathed or loved since first
it saw

That face which taught it faith, and
made it first

Think scorn to turn and look on change,
or see

How hateful in my love's sight are their
eyes

That give love's light to others.

Queen. Tell her so,

Not me; I care not though you love
your wife

So well that all strange women's eyes
and mine

Are hateful to you. Oh, what heart
have I,

That jest and wrangle? but indeed I
thought

You should do well to love her not, but
wed,

And make you strong, and get us
friends — but, nay,

God knows I know not what I thought,
or why,

When you should wed her: now I
think but this,

That if one love not, she does well to
die;

And if one love, she does not well to
live.

I pray you, go; not for my love who
pray,

But that for love's sake we thought well
to part,

And if we loved not it was well indeed.
Go.

Bothwell. To what end? and whither?
whencesoe'er,

I must come back.

Queen. Not to my feet, not mine;

Where should his end be for a married
man

To lie down lightly, with all care cast
off,

And sleep more sound than in love's
lap? for sleep

Between the two fair fiery breasts of
love

Will rest his head not oft, nor oft shut
eyes,

They say, that love's have looked on.

Bothwell. By that law,

Mine eyes must wake forever.

Queen. Nay, for shame,

Let not the fire in them that feeds on
mine

Strike fire upon my cheeks: turn off
their heat;

It takes my breath like flame, and
smothers me.

What! when I bid?

Bothwell. You have bid me do be-
fore

What you have chid me doing, but
never yet

A thing so past all nature hard, now
now

Shall chide me for obedience.

Queen. Well — ah me! —

I lack the heart to chide; I have borne
too much,

And haply too much loved. Alas! and
now

I am fain too much to show it; but he
that made

Made me no liar, nor gave me craft
with power

To choose what I might hide at will, or
show.

I am simple-souled and sudden in my
speech,
Too swift and hot of heart to guard my
lips
Or else lie lightly: wherefore while I
may,
Till my time come to speak of hate or
love,
I will be dumb, patient as pity's self
Gazing from Godward down on things
of the earth,
And dumb till the time be: would I
were God!
Time should be quicker to lend help
and hand
To men that wait on him. I will not
wait,
Lest I wait over-long, no more than
need,—
By my long love, I will not. Were I a
man,
I had been by this a free man.

Bothwell. Be content.

If I have any wit of soldiership,
'Tis not far off from this to the iron
day
That sets on the edge of battle, the
bare blow,
All that we fight or fret for. 'Tis not
like
Men will bear long with their own lin-
gering hopes
And hearts immitigable, and fiery fears
That burn above dead ashes of things
quenched
Hotter for danger, and light men forth
to fight,
And from between the breaking ranks
of war
The flower must grow of all their fears
and hopes,—
Hopes of high promise, fears made
quick by faith,
Angers, ambitions; which to gather and
wear
Must be our toil and garland.

Queen. My heart's lord,

I put my heart and hands into your
hand
To hold and help: do you what thing
in the world
Shall seem well to you with them, they
content

Live with your love, or die. For my
one part,

I would I had done with need of for-
ging words,

That I might keep truth pure upon my
lips.

I am weary of lying, and would not
speak word more

To mock my heart with, and win faith
from men,

But for the truth's sake of my love,
which lies

To save the true life in me.

Bothwell. It may be

You shall not long need to dress love
in lies:

This plighted plague of yours hath few
men friends

To put their bodies between death and
his.

Queen. Nay, I think not; and we
shall shape us friends

Out of the stuff of their close enmi-
ties,

Wherewith he walks inwoven and
wound about

To the edge and end of peril; yet God
knows

If I for all my cause would seek his
death,

Whose lips have stained me with report
as foul

As seem to mine their kisses, that like
brands

Scar my shamed face with fire to think
on them;

Yet would I rather let him live, would
God,

Without mine honor or my conscience
hurt,

Divide from mine his star, or bid it set,
And on my life lift up that light in
heaven

That is my day of the heart, my sun of
soul,

To shine till night shut up those loving
eyes,

That death could turn not from it
though the fire

Were quenched at heart that fed them.
Nay, no more:

Let me go hence, and weep not.

[*Exit*

Bothwell. Fire, in faith,
Enough to light him down the way of
the worm,
And leave me warmer. She went sud-
denly :
Doth she doubt yet ? I think, by God's
light, no :
I hold her over-fast by body and soul, —
Flesh holds not spirit closer. Now
what way
To shift him over the edge and end of
life,
She laughs and talks of, yet keep fast
my foot
On the strait verge of smooth-worn
stony things
That we stand still or slide on ? 'Tis
a shoal
Whereon the goodliest galleon of man's
hope,
That had no burning beacon such as
mine
Lit of her love to steer by, could not
choose
But run to wreck.

Re-enter MARY BEATON.

Mary Beaton. Pray you, my lord, a
word.
If you know aught of any new thing
here,
You will not be about the court to-
night :
If not, of my good will I counsel you,
Make hence in speed and secret, and
have hope
Till the next day lighten your days to
come.

Bothwell. I had rather the close moon
and stars a-night
Lit me to love-bed : what warm game
is here,
That I must keep mine hand out ?

Mary Beaton. Such a game
As you shall win and play not, or my wit
Is fallen in sickness from me. Sir, you
know
I am your friend, I have your hap at
heart,
Glad of your good, and in your crosses
crossed :
I pray you trust me, and be close and
wise,
For love of your own luck.

Bothwell. Tell me one thing :
What hand herein shall Master David
hold ?

Mary Beaton. I think he will not hold
the like alive. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — THE HIGH STREET.

BURGESSES and PEOPLE.

First Citizen. Was it not shown long
since when she came in,
If God were glad of her ? Two days
and nights
Ere she brought strife among us, and
again
Two nights and days when first we saw
her face,
We saw not once by day the sun's in
heaven,
The moon's by night, or any space of
stars,
But thick sick mist corrupting the moist
air
With drench of darkness, so that scarce
at noon
Might man spy man a bow-shot's length
away ;
And in man's memory on that day of
the year
Was never a more dolorous face of
heaven
Seen so to scowl on summer, as to speak
What comfort shall come with her to
this land ;
But then were most eyes blind.
Second Citizen. These five years since
Has God filled full of signs that they
might see,
And sent his plagues to open them ; and
most,
This year or twain what portents of his
hand
Have writ us down in heaven and
trembling earth
For fearful flatterers and for faithless
friends
Whose fear and friendship have no part
in him,
Who knows not or can read not ?
Famine, frost,
Storms of stars crossing, and strange
fires in the air, —
Have these no tongues to chide with ?

Third Citizen. Why, at first
 A man that was no seer might see what
 end
 Should come on us that saw the mass
 come in,
 And held our hand when man by man
 fell off,
 And heart by heart was cooled of all
 its heat
 By sprinkled holy-water of the court
 In five days' space, tempering the fer-
 vent edge
 That had been fieriest on God's side:
 Lord James,
 Whose heart should weep now for it,
 or burn again
 With shame to think how he made
 strong their hands
 Who have cast him out among the
 banished lords
 That lack their life in England, kept
 himself
 The chapel-door, that none who loved
 God's law
 Might slay the idolatrous and whorish
 priest
 In his mid sin; and after mass was said
 Lord Robert and Lord John of Cold-
 ingham,
 Who then had put not off our cause,
 but sat
 With faithful men as fellows at God's
 board,
 Conveyed him to his chamber: there
 began
 The curse that yet constrains us, and
 must fall
 On more than these; of whom ye
 know this John
 Is now before the face o' the fire of
 God,
 And ere he died in desperate penitence,
 Men say, sent warning to his sister
 queen
 To turn her feet from those unquiet
 ways
 Wherein they tread behind the Pope's
 to hell.

First Citizen. His life was like his
 brother's of St. Cross,
 As foul as need or friar's or abbot's be
 That had no shameful part in a king's
 race,

And made such end as he that lives may
 make,
 Whose bastard blood is proud yet, and
 insults
 As might a prince's or a priest's indeed,
 Being truly neither, yet with either name
 Signed as in scorn; these are our lords,
 whose lust
 Breaks down men's doors to fetch their
 daughters forth,
 Even as his townsmen vexed the doors
 of Lot
 Till God sent on them fire, who spares
 but these
 For our shame's sake, because we spare,
 being men,
 And let our hands hang swordless, and
 the wrath
 Faint in our hearts, that though God
 send none down
 Should be made fire to make a fire of
 them.

Third Citizen. These fools and foul
 that with them draw the king
 To shame and riotous insolence which
 turns
 Past hope and love to loathing, — these,
 though vile,
 Have in them less of poison than men's
 tongues
 Who for the queen's love boast in what
 brief while
 They will pluck down God, and plant
 Antichrist,
 And pull out Knox by the ears: thus
 Bothwell did,
 And yet stands higher than any head
 save his
 Who in disdain of danger fills his hands
 As full of gold as are his faithless lips
 Of lies and bloody counsels, and
 requires
 No less than part in all their forfeit
 lands
 That live in exile, so to turn his name
 From loon to lord, from stranger into
 Scot,
 And next the Pope's exalt it: while
 this king
 Sets all his heart to fleshly foolishness,
 The beastlike body that eats up the
 soul
 As a bird snared and eaten; and in fear

Of God and Rimmon, with a supple
soul,
Crooks his lithe knee for craft, and bows
his back
In either's house, yet seeks no prophet's
leave,
Nor hears his saying that God shall
spew the like
Out of his mouth.

Second Citizen. Yet this good grows in
him,
That he has fallen in anger with the
queen

For her knave's sake that was his
closest friend,

Chief craftsman and main bulder of
the match;

Yea, half his heart, brother and bed-
fellow,

Sworn secret on his side.

Third Citizen. There are who think
They have changed beds in very and
shameful deed,

And halved more than their own hearts.

First Citizen. He came here
On the Pope's party, against our kingly
lords,

Against the duke, our first more natu-
ral head,

Against the good-will of all godliness;
And hath he now cast their cords from
him? nay,

This is the stormy sickness of ill blood
Swelling the veins of sin in violent
youth

That makes them wrangle, but at home
and heart,

Whatever strife there seem of hands
abroad,

They are single-minded in the hate of
God.

Did he not break forth into bitterness,
Being warned by Knox of youth and
empty heart,

Yea, rail aloud as one made mad with
wine?

Did he not lay devices with this knave
That now ye say defiles him in his
wife,

To rid the noble Murray from their
way,

That they might ride with hotter spurs
for hell?

Second Citizen. God hath set strife
betwixt them, that their feet
Should not be long time out of their
own snares.

Here be the men we look for comfort
from,

Men that have God's mark sharp upon
the soul;

Stout Ochiltree, and our main stay
John Knox.

Enter JOHN KNOX and OCHILTREE.

Ochiltree. Have you yet hope that
for his people's sake

God will leave off to harden her hard
heart,

That you will yet plead with her?

John Knox. Nay, I know not;

But what I may by word or witness
borne,

That will I do, being bidden: yet indeed
I think not to bring down her height of
mind

By counsel or admonishment. Her
soul

Is as a flame of fire, insatiable,
And subtle as thin water; with her
craft

Is passion mingled so inseparably
That each gets strength from other, her
swift wit

By passion being enkindled and made
hot,

And by her wit her keen and passionate
heart

So tempered that it burn itself not out,
Consuming to no end. Never, I think,
Hath God brought up against the peo-
ple of God,

To try their force or feebleness of faith,
A foe than this more dangerous, nor of
mood

More resolute against him.

Ochiltree. So long since
You prophesied of her when new come
in:

What then avails it that you counsel
her

To be not this born danger that she is,
But friends with God she hates, and
with his folk

She would root out and ruin?

John Knox. Yet this time
I am not bidden of him to cast her off

I will speak once; for here even in our eyes

His enemies grow great, and cast off shame.

We are haled up out of hell to heaven, and now

They would fain pluck us backward by the skirt.

And these men call me bitter-tongued and hard,

Who am not bitter; but their work and they

Who gather garlands from the red pit-side

To make foul fragrance in adulterous hair,

And lift white hands to hide the fires of God, —

Their sweetness and their whiteness shall he turn

Bitter and black. I have no hate of her,

That I should spare; I will not spare to strive

That the strong God may spare her, and not man.

Ochiltree. Yea, both, so be we have our lost lords home,

And the Pope's back-bowed changeling clean cast out

And of a knave made carrion.

John Knox. For your first,

It grows as fruit out of your second wish:

Come but the day that looks in his dead face,

And these that hate him as he hates all good

Shall have their friends home, and their honor high

Which the continuance of his life keeps low.

Ochiltree. Surely, for that, my hand or any's else

Were hot enough to help him to his end. Yet when this thing is through, and this

plague purged,

There stands a thorn yet in our way to prick, —

The loose, weak-witted, half-souled boy called king.

John Knox. It is of him I am bidden speak with her,

Having but now rebuked him back sliding

In God's sight and his name. It may be yet,

Whether by foolishness and envious heart,

Or by some nobler touch left in his blood, —

Some pulse of spirit that beats to a tune more high

Than base men set their hearts by, — he will turn

Helpful to Godward, serviceable in soul

To good men's ends in hate of that they hate.

I cannot say: howbeit, I fear not much

Her love of him will keep him fast to her;

If he be drawn in bonds after her wheels,

It will be but of subtle soul and craft

The cords are woven that hold him. But, for me,

Love they or hate, my way is clear with them:

Not for her sake nor his sake shall our Lord

Change counsel and turn backward; and save his

What will or wit I have to speak or live,

He knows who made it little for myself, But for him great; and be you well

assured,

Love of their love nor doubt of their dislike

Hath upon me more power than upon God.

For now I have seen him strive these divers years

With spirits of men and minds exorbitant,

Souls made as iron and their face as flame

Full hard and hot against him, and their wits

Most serpent-strong and swift, sudden of thought

And overflowing of counsel, and their hands . Full of their fortune, and their hearts made large

To hold increase of all prosperities;

And all these are not, and I poor man
am,

Because he hath taken and set me on
his side,

And not where these were; I am con-
tent alone

To keep mine own heart in his secret
sight

Naked and clean, well knowing that no
man born

Shall do me scathe but he hath bidden
him do,

Nor I speak word but as he hath set it
me.

First Citizen. Goes he to Holyrood ?

Second Citizen. Ay, sir, by noon.

First Citizen. There is a kindling
trouble in the air;

The sun is halting toward the top of
day;

It will be shine or rain before he
come.

Ochiltree. What ails this folk to
hover at our heel,

And hang their eyes on you so heed-
fully?

John Knox. They should be natu-
rally disquieted,

Seeing what new wind makes white the
wave o' the time

We ride on out of harbor. — Sirs, ye
have heard

News of your scathe and of shame done
to God,

And the displeasure bites you by the
heart,

I doubt not, if your hearts be godly
given:

Make your souls strong in patience;
let your wrath

Be rather as iron than as fuel in fire,
Tempered and not consumed; heat

that burns out,
Leaves the hearth chillier for the flame-
less ash

Than ere the wood was kindled.

First Citizen. Master Knox,

You know us, whereto we would, and
by what way:

This too much patience burns our
cheeks with shame

That our hands are not redder than our
face

With slaying of manslaughterers who spill
blood of faith,

And pierce the heart of naked holiness.
It is far gone in rumor, how the queen

Will set on high and feed on gold that
man

Who was a scourge laid long since on
the saints, —

The archbishop of St. Andrew's; and
perforce,

Dyed as he stands in grain with inno-
cent blood,

Will make him mightier for our scathe
and shame

Than ere the kindly people of the word
Has made him bare of bad authority.

Second Citizen. Likewise she hath
given her seal imperial

To a lewd man and a stranger, her own
knave,

Vile, and a papist; that with harp and
song

Makes her way smoother toward the pit
of hell.

John Knox. What needs us count
and cast offences up

That all we know of, how all these
have one head, —

The hateful head of unstanch'd mis-
belief?

For sins are sin-begotten, and their seed
Bred of itself and singly procreative;

Nor is God served with setting this to
this

For evil evidence of several shame,
That one may say, Lo now! so many

are they;

But if one, seeing with God-illumin'd
eyes

In his full face the encountering face of
sin,

Smite once the one high-fronted head,
and slay,

His will we call good service. For
myself,

If ye will make a counsellor of me,

I bid you set your hearts against one
thing

To burn it up, and keep your hearts on
fire,

Not seeking here a sign and there a
sign,
Nor curious of all casual sufferances,

But steadfast to the undoing of that
 thing done
 Whereof ye know the being, however
 it be,
 And all the doing abominable of God.
 Who questions with a snake if the
 snake sting?
 Who reasons of the lightning if it burn?
 While these things are, deadly will
 these things be;
 And so the curse that comes of cursed
 faith.

First Citizen. It is well said.

Second Citizen. Ay, and well done
 were well.

Third Citizen. We have borne too
 long for God, we that are men,
 Who hath time to bear with evil if he
 would,
 Having for life's length even eternity;
 But we that have but half our life to live,
 Whose half of days is swallowed of
 their nights,—

We take on us this lame long-suffering,
 To sit more still and patienter than
 God,

As though we had space to doubt in,
 and long time

For temperate, quiet, and questionable
 pause.

First Citizen. Let the time come—

Second Citizen. Nay, we must make
 the time,

Bid the day bring forth to us the fruit
 we would,

Or else fare fruitless forth.

Third Citizen. It is nigh noon;
 There will be shine and rain and shine
 ere night.

SCENE III. — HOLYROOD.

*The QUEEN and RIZZIO; MARY SEY-
 TON and MARY CARMICHAEL in at-
 tendance.*

Queen. Is he so tender-tongued? it is
 his fear

That plucks the fang out from his hate,
 and makes

A stingless snake of his malignant
 heart;

He hath a mind—or, had he a mind at
 all.

Would have a mind—to mischief; but
 his will

Is a dumb devil.

Rizzio. Why, fear then and no love
 Will make faith in him out of false-
 hood's self,

And keep him constant through un-
 stableness.

Queen. Fear that makes faith may
 break faith; and a fool

Is but in folly stable. I cannot tell

If he indeed fear these men more than
 me;

Or if he slip their collar, whether or no
 He will be firm on my side, as you

say,
 Through very lightness; but I think
 not of him,

Steadfast or slippery. Would I had
 been that day

Handless, when I made one his hand
 with mine!

Yet it seemed best. I am spirit-sick
 and faint

With shame of his foul follies and
 loathed life,

Which hath no part but lewdness of a
 man,

Nor style of soul nor several quality,
 Dividing men from men, and man from

beast,
 By working heart or complement of
 brain,—

None, very none. I will not see him
 to-night.

I have given command to insure our
 privacy.

Is it past noon?

Enter DARNLEY and MARY BEATON.

Darnley. You say she hath asked for
 me?

Mary Beaton. Ay, and complainingly,
 as though her love

Were struck at by your absence.

Darnley. Love! her love!

It were a cunning stroke should print a
 wound

In that which hath no substance, and
 no spirit

To feel the hurt. Well, I will speak to
 her.

Queen. How like a chidden bondman
 of his lord

Looks my lord now! Come you from
penance, sir?

Has the kirk put you to no private
shame

Besides the public tongue of broad re-
buke?

We are blessed in your penitence; it is
A gracious promise for you.

Darnley. Penitence?

Queen. You have a tender faith and
quick remorse

That will bear buffets easily; pray God
It pluck you absolution from their
hands

Who are godly sparing of it. We have
heard

A priest of theirs cast for incontinence
Hardly with thrice purgation of his
shame

Redeemed himself to kirkward.

Darnley. I hear naught.

Queen. Nay, but you hear when these
rebuke you of sin

In the full face and popular ear of men;
You hear them surely, and patiently
you hear,

And it shows in you godliness and
grace

Praiseworthy from them; for myself,
my lord,

I have some foolish petulances in me
And stings of pride that shut me out
from grace

So sought and bought of such men;
but your course

May teach me timelier humble-minded-
ness

And patience to get favor: which till
now

I have never needed beg, and now
should prove

A very witless beggar. Teach me
words,

Pray you, to move men's minds with;
such great men's

As your submission purchases to be
Good friends and patrons to you; for I
fear

Your Knox is not my friend yet.

Darnley. So I think.

Madam, I know not what you make of
me,

Nor if your jest be seasonable or no;

I am no fool nor implement of theirs,
Nor patienter of their irreverences
Than the queen's self; if you endure
such tongues,

Why, I may bear them.

Queen. Well and patiently;

I praise your manhood's temper for it
and am

The happier for your royalty of spirit
That will not feel wrong done of baser
men

To be at all wrong done you.

Darnley. Will you think it?

Well then, I am so, I am just your
thought;

You read me right, and this our friend
reads too,

For I am plain and easy to read right.

Queen. Have you made time to say
so?

Darnley. Ay, and this,

That it mislikes me—it gives me dis-
content

That men should—

Queen. Ay? that men should—any
thing—

Bear themselves manlike, or that men
should be,—

It is offence done openly to you?

Darnley. Nay, not offence, nor open;
naught it is,

Or to me naught.

Queen. Naught as I think, indeed.

You were about to chide us? well it is
You have so humble a wife of us and
true,

To make your chidings fruitful, that
your words

Bear and bring forth good seed of bet-
tering change.

I pray you, when you chide me, that
you make

Your stripes the gentler for my humble-
ness.

Darnley. I have no mind to jest and
jape, and will—

And will not wrangle with you.

Queen. Will, and will not?

They say a woman's will is made like
that,

But your will yet is wilfuller than ours

Darnley. Not as I think.

Queen. God better the king's thought

And mind more tyrannous than is his place!

Darnley. If I be king —

Queen. And I be kingdomless,
And place be no place, and distinction die

Between the crown and curch — Well,
on, our lord.

Darnley. Why am I out of counsel
with you? Whence

Am I made show of for a titular fool,
And have no hand in enterprise of
yours,

Nor tongue, nor presence? Not alone
my name

That is rubbed out and grated off your
gold,

But myself plucked out of your register,
Made light account of, held as nothing-
ness,

Might move me —

Queen. Whither?

Darnley. To some show of wrath
More than complaint, if I were minded
ill.

Here is a breach made with the English
queen,

Our cousin of England, a wide-open
breach,

A great-grown quarrel, and I no part
of it,

Not named or known of.

Queen. You are the happier man
Heavenward, if blessed be the peace-
able.

Darnley. The happier heavenward,
being the worldlier shamed;

The less I like it. You have suddenly
cast forth

A man her servant and ambassador,
With graceless haste and instance, from
the realm,

On barren charge of bare complicity
With men now banished and in English
bounds,

But not attain of treason toward us
yet

Nor deadly doomed of justice.

Queen. Not attain?

Give not your spirit trouble for that;
the act

Is drawn by this against them, and the
estates

Need but give warrant to their forfeit-
ure,

Now it has passed the lords of the
articles.

Take no care for it; though it be sweet
in you,

And gracious, to show care of your
worst foes

You have on earth; that would have
driven you forth

A shameful rebel to your cousin queen,
And naked of our foreign favor here

That clothed you with unnatural royalty
And not your proper purple. Forth;

you say

I have done this wrong?

Darnley. I do not say you have done
Wise work nor unwise; but howbeit, I
say

I had no part in aught of it, nor knew
With what a spur's prick you provoked
her spleen

Who is not stinging to requite it you,
Nor with what scant of reason.

Queen. 'Tis sad truth,
She shows no less disquiet mind than
yours,

Nor a less loud displeasure: she was
kind,

She says, well-willed to me-ward, but
my sins,

Unkindliness, and soul's obduracy,
Have made her soft heart hard; and
for this fault

She will not ever counsel me again,
Nor cease to comfort my dear brother's
need

With gold and good compassion; and
I have

Even such a sister as brother of her as
him,

And love alike and am like loved of
them.

He wills me well, she swears, as she
herself,

And, I'll re-swear it, she wills as well
as he.

Darnley. Ay, we know whence this
wellspring of your will

Takes head and current; who must
have brave wars

We know, fair field, broad booty to
sweep up,

Space to win spurs in ; and what English gild
 Must after battle gild his heels with them,
 When he shall stand up in my father's stead,
 Lieutenant-general for you of the realm ;
 And who must have your brother's lands we know,
 Investiture must have, and chancellorship,
 And masterdom in council. Here he stands,
 A worthy witness to it : do you look on me ?
 Is it not you must be the golden sir,
 The counsel-keeper, the sole tongue of the head,
 The general man, the goodly ? Did you send
 Lord Bothwell hard at heel of him cast forth
 To make his wrong sweet with sweet-spoken words,
 And temper the sharp taste of outrage done
 And heat in him of anger, with false breath ?
 Why made you not your own tongue tunable
 Who are native to soft speaking, and who hate
 With as good heart as any Scot that hates
 England ? or is her messenger your fool
 To take blows from you and good words alike
 As it shall chance him cross your morning mood
 Angry or kindly ?
Queen. Sir, our chancellor,
 We charge you that you answer not the duke.
Darnley. Duke ?
Queen. Ay, the duke of Rothsay ; whom we pray
 Seek elsewhere some seemlier talking-stock
 To flush his hot and feverish wit upon.
Darnley. Your chancellor ? why went not such a man
 With you before the lords of the articles

Now, an hour back, and yet but half day through,
 To help you speak the banished lords to death ?
 Is't not the heart of the office, to see law
 Punish law's traitors, as you bid them be
 In the proof's teeth, who are honester than some
 You bid be law's justiciaries of them ?
 Why went he not ? 'twere no more shame nor praise
 Than here to swell in state beside your own.
Queen. Must we crave leave to bid you twice take leave,
 Or twice to ask what would you ?
Darnley. Truly this,
 A mere mean thing, an insignificance,
 If you will once more hear — oh, no — wise me,
 But just the man whose name you take in mouth
 To smite me on my face with — Master Knox.
Queen. Are you his usher going before his grace
 No less than servant to his master-word ?
 Or is it penitence and submission makes you
 In the holy way of honor and recompense
 So high in office with him ? Say, this time
 For the usher's sake I'll speak with the usher's lord :
 Yet if I mind 'twas I bade send for him
 To speak of you his servant : for I hear
 You did not at first stripe submit yourself,
 Nor take all penance with all patience, being
 Brought hardly in time to harsh humility
 Such as we see now ; which thing craves excuse
 To make you gracious in your master's eyes,
 If it be true — I would not think it were —

You brake in anger forth from the
 High Kirk,
 Being there rebuked, and would not sit
 at meat,
 But past away to hawking in pure rage
 After an hour or twain of high dis-
 course
 Heard with plain show of sharp un-
 thankfulness;
 Which that you now repent, and would
 redeem,
 I will bear witness for you to your
 lord
 To make your penitential peace with
 him.
 Let him come in.

Darnley. I am no messenger.

Queen. Where is my chamberlain?
 bid Marnock here —

Let the man in, and one man only more,
 Whoever it be; we'll see him privily.
 Our chancellor, and our no messenger,
 We have no need of to dispute with
 him.

Darnley. If I go hence —

Queen. Why, then you stay not here.

Darnley. But if I go at bidding —

Queen. Why, you go:

With the more speed, the less of tar-
 riance made.

Let me not hold you half-way back:
 farewell.

[*Exeunt DARNLEY and RIZZIO.*

I have not begun so luckily, nor set
 So good a face on the first half of day,
 Now to keep terms with mere tongue-
 traitors more.

Enter JOHN KNOX and JOHN ERSKINE
OF DUN.

So once we are met again, sir, you and I.
 Set him before us.

John Knox. I am before your grace
 Without man's haling or compulsive
 word:

Nor at these divers times you have sent
 for me

Have you found need to use me force-
 fully.

Queen. Well, let that be; as verily
 meseems

'Tis I find forceful usage at your hands,
 And handling such as never prince has
 borne

Since first kings were; yet have I
 borne with it,

Who am your natural princess, and sat
 by

To hear your rigorous manner of
 speaking through

As loud against my kinsfolk as myself;
 Yea, I have sought your favor dili-

gently,
 And friendship of my natural subject
 born,

And reconciliation by all possible
 means;

I have offered you at your own choice
 and time

Whensoe'er it pleased you ever admonish
 me

Presence and audience; yea, have
 shamed myself

With reasonless submission; have en-
 dured

The naked edge of your sharp speech,
 and yet

Cannot be quit of you: but here to
 God

I make my vow I will be once revenged.
 Give me my handkerchief. I should

take shame
 That he can shame me with these tears,
 to make

Mine eyes his vassals.

John Knox. Madam, true it is
 There have been divers seasons of dis-
 pute

Between your grace and me, wherein I
 have never

Found you offended: neither now
 would find

The offence I sought not; yea, I knew
 this well,

If it shall please God break your
 prison-house,

And lighten on your disimprisoned
 soul,

That my tongue's freedom shall offend
 you not.

For surely being outside the preaching-
 place

I think myself no breeder of offence,
 Nor one that gives man cause of wrath

and wrong;

And being therein, I speak not of my
 self

But as God bids who bids me, speaking
plain,
Flatter no flesh on earth. Lo, here I
stand,
A single soul and naked in his eye,
Constrained of him, to do what thing
he will,
And dare and can none other. Hath
he sent me
To speak soft words of acceptable
things
In ladies' chambers or kings' courts, to
make
Their ways seem gracious to them? I
wot, no.
I am to bring God's gospel in men's
ears,
And faith therein, and penitence, which
are
The twain parts of it; but the chief o'
the land
And all the main of your nobility
Give God no heed, nor them that speak
for God,
Through flattering fear and ill respect
of you;
And seeing, if one preach penitence to
men,
He must needs note the sin he bids
repent,
How should not I note these men's sin
who choose
To serve affections in you, and wild
will,
Rather than truth in God? This were
lost breath,
To chide the general wrong-doing of
the world,
And not the very present sin that
burns
Here in our eyes offensive, — bid serve
God,
And say not with what service.

Queen. Nay, but so
What is it to you, or any saving me,
How this man married to me bears
himself?
With what sign-manual has God war-
ranted
Your inquisition of us? What am I,
That my most secret sanctuaries of life
And private passages of hours should
be

Food for men's eyes, or pavement for
men's feet
To peer and pasture, track and tread
upon,
Insult with instance? Am I only
bound
To let the common mouth communi-
cate
In my life's sweet or bitter sacrament,
The wine poured, the bread broken
every day?
To walk before men bare, that they may
judge
If I were born with any spot or no,
And praise my naked nature? to sub-
ject
Mine unsubmitted soul subordinate
To popular sight and sentence? What
am I,
That I should be alone debarred, de-
posed,
From the poor right of poor men, who
may live
Some hour or twain unchallenged of
the day,
And make to no man answer what
they do
As I to mine must render? who is this
That takes in hand such hard things
and such high?
Sir, what man are you, that I need
account
For this word said, or that, or such
things done,
Only to you or mainly, of myself?
Yea, what are you within this common-
wealth?

John Knox. A man within it, and a
subject born,
Madam; and howsoever no great man,
Earl, lord, nor baron to bear rule
therein,
Yet has God made me a profitable man,
How abject I seem ever in your eye,
No member of the same unmeritable.
Yea, madam, this pertains not less to
me
Than any of all your noble-nurtured
men,
To warn men of what things may hurt
the same,
So as I see them dangerous; and here
in

My conscience and mine office with one
 tongue
 Crave plainness of me: wherefore to
 yourself
 I say the thing I speak in public place,
 That what great men soever at any
 time
 Shall be consenting to your lord's un-
 faith
 Or flattering furtherance of unfaith in
 you,
 They do what in them lieth to cast out
 Christ,
 Banish his truth, betray his liberty
 And free right of this realm, and in the
 end
 Shall haply do small comfort to your-
 self.
 And for him too, your husband, it may
 be
 That as he spares not to dishonor God
 For your delight, by service of the
 mass,
 God will not spare to smite him by
 your hand
 That faithlessly he fawns on to his loss.
Queen. When was there queen so
 handled in the world?
 I would I could not weep; for being
 thus used
 I needs must never or now. Is this
 light day?
 Am I asleep, or mad, or in a trance,
 That have such words to beat about
 mine ears,
 And in mine eyes his present face who
 speaks?
Erskine of Dun. Madam, I pray your
 grace contain your mood,
 And keep your noble temperance of
 yourself,
 For your high sake and honor, who are
 held
 For excellence of spirit and natural
 soul
 As sovereign born as for your face and
 place,
 Kingdom, and kingly beauty; to whose
 might
 The worthiest of the world, all Europe's
 chief,
 Her choice of crowns, might gladly
 bow themselves

To find your favor. I beseech you
 think
 That here is no disloyalty designed,
 Nor thing dishonorable; for were men
 mad
 Whose wits are whole, and false whose
 faiths are sound,
 The very mouth of madness would
 speak sense,
 The very tongue of treason would
 speak truth,
 For love and service of your royalty;
 Blind curses bless, and red rebellion
 bow,
 That came to burn and threaten. Do
 not dream
 That a man faithful Godward and well
 loved
 Can be to you-ward evil-willed, who
 have
 Power on your natural and your born
 unfriends
 To bind their good-will to you.
Queen. Words, all words;
 I am weary of words: I have heard
 words enough
 To build and break, if breath could
 break or build,
 Centuries of men. What would they
 with me, sir?
 These my liege folk that love me to
 the death,—
 Their death or mine, no matter,—my
 fast friends
 Whose comfortable balms so bruise
 my head
 It cannot hold the crown up; these
 good hands
 That wring my wrist round to wrench
 out the staff
 God set into mine own; these loving,
 lips
 That take my name upon them as to
 kiss,
 And leave it rank with foam of hateful
 speech?
 Must I be dead deposed, or must I live
 Stript shameless, naked to the very
 name,
 A crestless creature and displumed,
 that feeds
 On charities and chances? will they
 give

Me, their queen born, me, bread or dust
 to eat,
 With a mouth water-moistened or a
 dry,
 Beggared or buried? shall I hold my
 head
 In shameful fief and tenantry of these
 For their least wind of any wrath that
 blows
 To storm it off my shoulders? What
 were I
 That being so born should be born
 such a thing
 As bondsmen might bemock the bond-
 age of
 And slaves condemn for slavery? Nay,
 no words:
 A word may wound, and no word heal
 again,
 As none can me — whom all men's
 words may wound —
 Who am liable to all buffets of men's
 tongues,
 All stripes of all their scandals — and
 was born
 To no such fear — and have nor tongue
 nor wit
 To plead and gather favor — no such
 grace
 As may get grace, no piteous skilful-
 ness —
 Only my truth and tears; and would
 to God
 My tears and truth for you were wind
 and fire
 To burn and blow corruption from the
 world,
 And leave pure peace to breed where
 you plant war,
 And make the furrows fat with pesti-
 lence
 And the grain swell with treason! but,
 too sure,
 They too can hurt, and heal not. I am
 soul-sick
 With shame and bitter weakness; yet,
 God's will,
 I may take strength about me to put
 off
 Some part of shame. Sir, you that
 make me weep,
 By these my tears and my sharp shame
 of them

I swear you will not laugh to see me
 laugh,
 When my time comes: you shall not;
 I will have
 Time to my friend yet; I shall see
 you, sir,
 If you can weep or no, that with dry eyes
 Have seen mine wet; I will try that:
 look to't.
John Knox. Madam, — I speak in
 very eye of God, —
 I never took delight in any tears
 Shed of God's creatures; yea, for my
 self-sake,
 I can but very hardly abide the tears
 Of mine own boys whom mine own
 hand and love
 Chastens, and much less can take any
 joy
 In this the weeping of your majesty.
 But, seeing I have given you no offen-
 sive cause
 Nor just occasion, but have spoken
 truth
 After mine office as mine own place
 craves
 Lest I, God's man, be man-sworn to
 God's truth,
 I must sustain, howbeit unwillingly,
 Rather these tears drawn of your
 majesty
 Than blood of mine own conscience
 stabbed to death
 Or through my silence of my common-
 wealth
 By my dumb treason wounded.
Queen. A fair word:
 I thought it was forgotten of men's
 mouths,
 And only lived in the inner heat of the
 heart,
 Too sure to want the spelling of their
 speech.
 Sir, you shall find it in my very tears, —
 This blood you fear for of your com-
 monwealth,
 And in the hurts of mine authority
 The wounds it lies abed with; what,
 God help,
 Can the head bleed, and not the body
 faint?
 Or wherein should the kingdom *feel*
 such main

As in the kingship stricken? there are
you,

If you be true man, and each true man
born

Subject, and circled with the bound of
rule,

Hurt to the heart. But heartless things
are words:

Henceforth I will not mix my speech
with yours

In the way of disputation ever more,
Nor set against your tongue the plea of
mine

To reason as its equal. Wait you here,
Here in the chamber: you, sir, come
with me

To counsel in my cabinet somewhere:
We will return his answer.

[*Exeunt* QUEEN and ERSKINE OF DUN.
Mary Carmichael. She wept sore;

I never saw her spirit, so chafed, so
melt

And thaw to such mere passion; this
one time

He is sure attained.

Mary Beaton. Ay, she fain would
dare

Upon the spur of the hour attain him;
yet

What none dare else, she durst not:
they will put

Force of fair words as bridle in the
mouth

Of her wild will and reinless.

Mary Seyton. She is wise,
And fights not wisdom, but being coun-
selling well

Takes truce with time and tongueless
policy.

What! will the man speak to us? he
looks so hard

With such fast eyes and sad; I had
not thought

His face so great, nor presence.

John Knox. Ah! fair ladies,
How fair were this your life and pleas-
urable

If this might ever abide, and so in the
end

With all this gay gear we might pass
to heaven!

But fie upon that knave, Death, that
will come,

Whether we will or will not: and being
come,

When he has laid on his assured arrest,
The foul worms will be busy with this
flesh,

Be it never so fair and tender; and the
soul,

The silly soul shall be so feeble, I fear,
It can bear with it neither gold nor
pearl,

Painting of face, garnish, nor precious
stones.

Mary Beaton. Sir, for myself, small
joy this were to me,

That this life should live ever; nor
would I

Care much by praying to stretch my
days of life

Into more length, nor much to take
with me

Garnish or gold: but one thing I would
fain

Have to go grave-wards with me, and
keep it safe,

That you have cast no word or warning
on,

And yet women, whose hearts are
worldly worn

And by no creed of yours consolable,
Nor gladness of your gospel, love its
name

As dear as God's; and its name is but
rest.

John Knox. Rest has no other name
but only God's.

Mary Beaton. But God has many an-
other name than rest:

His name is life, and life's is weariness.

John Knox. Ay, but not his: that
life has lost his name;

Peace is his name, and justice.

Mary Beaton. Ah, sir! see,
Can these two names be one name
on earth

Can two keep house together that have
name

Justice and peace? where is that man
i' the world

Who have found peace in the arms of
justice lain,

Or justice at the breast of peace asleep?
Is not God's justice painted like as
ours,

A strong man armed, a swordsman red
as fire,
Whose hands are hard, and his feet
washed in blood?

It were an iron peace should sleep with
him,

And rest were unrest that should kiss
his lips.

What man would look on justice here,
and live,

Peace has no more part in him.

John Knox. Lady, nay,
That only peace indeed which is of God
Hath in the just man not a part, but
all,

But the whole righteous life and heart
in him

Still peacefully possesses; who hath
not

Or loves not justice, he can love not
peace,

For peace is just; and that thing is not
peace

That such men love, but full of strife
and lies,

A thing of thorns and treasons. This
were even

As if a man loving a harlot should
Praise her for maiden and himself for
pure

To love such maidenhood, when any
says

That he loves peace who loves not
holiness;

For peace is holy. Yea, and if one
seek

He shall find peace where bitterest
justice is,

In the full fire and middle might of
wrath,

Rather than where sloth sucks the lips
of shame

Or fear with her foul brother unbelief
Lives in adultery; strife is that which
springs,

As a winged worm and poisonous, of
their sheets;

And in the slumberless and storm-
strewn bed

That very war's self spreads for right-
eousness

Peace as a babe is born.

Mary Beaton. Would God it were!

For 'tis a bitter childbed: these long
years

We look for fruit, and none comes forth
of it,

But yet more iron travail; and our-
selves,

Desiring justice, quite lose hold of
peace,

And are distracted with our own fierce
want

And hungry need of right unreachable.
Yet it may come, and then shall peace
indeed.

John Knox. You talk against your
habit.

Re-enter ERSKINE OF DUN.

Erskine of Dun. Master Knox,
The queen will no more hear you at
this time,

But with good-will and gracious mind
will weigh

Your worth and worthy meaning in
your words.

John Knox. It may be she will never
hear me more.

Farewell, fair ladies; may God look
on you,

And give you chiefly comfort, which is
grace.

[*Exeunt* JOHN KNOX and ERSKINE OF
DUN.

Mary Seyton. Why did you prate so
preacher-like with him?

Mary Beaton. I cannot tell by asking
of myself,

Nor answer for your asking. Which
of you

Shall wait at supper on the queen to-
night?

Mary Carmichael. None but her coun-
sel of close hours, Argyle.

Mary Beaton. She sups with them;
and in attendance there

Some two or three I heard of,--one of
these

No man of arms.

Mary Seyton. What should they do
with arms?

More need of lips to sing with.

Mary Beaton. Ay, to sing:

It is no matter of state they meet upon!

Mary Seyton. Are your wits lost in-
deed, or do you jest?

Mary Beaton. True, it should be for
no affairs of state
They sup at nightfall in the lesser
room, —
They three, and three to make the
music up.
Mary Seyton. What ails you at it?
Mary Beaton. Nothing; I ail naught.
I did but think what music he should
make
After this preacher! Let us to the
queen.

SCENE IV. — DARNLEY'S LODGING.

DARNLEY and SIR GEORGE DOUGLAS.
Darnley. I think our friend of Mor-
ton had grown slack
But for my spurring, uncle.

Sir George Douglas. Nay, he is firm:
You do him less right than you do
yourself
To think he should need quickening.

Darnley. Oh, I know not:
What should I know? what wit have I
to know?

I am a fool, and have no forethought!
Why,

But for my resolute instance at this
need, —

I said to him, Be resolute, — and since
then,

Some six or eight hours gone, I have
heard such things

As would put sense and passion in
dead bones, —

By God I have; it shall be seen I have.
But are you sure it should be done to-
night?

Sir George Douglas. Ay, surely.

Darnley. Well, I see no surety in it.
Methinks now, every day we let him
live

Blows hot the popular wrath of all the
land,

And makes us surer, when we strike
indeed,

That all men's hearts will stab him
with our hands.

Sir George Douglas. By which ac-
count he might live long, and die

An old white death and woundless. Is
not this

The man whereof you told me some
while since

How at close midnight, your wife's
doors being locked,

You burst them open, and gat hold of
him

Hid in a closet of her bedchamber,
Save for furred gown and shirt about
the knave

Naked? and must you take him so
again,

And he so twice get clear of you, and
laugh?

You swore me that: what need to tell
or swear,

If he must live still? weeping, with
clenched hands,

You swore it, praying me for our
shame's sake send

Word to your uncle Ruthven; but
what need,

If there were no shame in the thing at
all,

Or but so little, as now so little it
seems,

There is no haste to slay him?

Darnley. Nay, you carp:

'Tis thus men ever catch at my good
words,

To turn them on their tongues, and spit
them out

Changed and discolored. He shall
die to-night.

Sir George Douglas. Assuredly.

Darnley. I say so, — mark, I say it,
I that have cause: how else could it be
sure?

But sure it is, — I say he shall not live.
Let us go seek Lord Morton out again,

And tell him it is sworn we strike to-
night.

How many of us have hands in it with
me,

Who cannot with mine own hand as I
would

Strike — it were shameful to me —
were it not?

For mine own hand's sake.

Sir George Douglas. There are lands
enough

Without the shame done to your high-
ness' hand:

Sufficeth us we have it set to the bond

That signs him dead; nor need we
sum their names
Whose hands will strike, not spare, for
their own sakes.

Darnley. Well, let us go to make my
lord's faith sure
That it shall be no later than to-night.

SCENE V.—THE QUEEN'S CABINET.

*The QUEEN, RIZZIO, COUNTESS OF
ARGYLE, LORD ROBERT STUART,
ARTHUR ERSKINE, in attendance.*

Queen. Have I not done a queenlike
work to-day?

I have made attaint my traitors of my-
self;

With no man at my hand to strengthen
me,

Have gone before the lords of the
articles,

And set my will upon them like a seal,
And they for their part set on their old
friends

The bloody seal of treason signed of
death

And countersigned of burning igno-
miny.

You are half fearful, you, lord chancel-
lor,

You my good servant; but I knew their
necks

Were made to take the impression of
my foot,

Their wills and souls the likeness of
mine own,

And I have used them for the things
they are.

Countess of Argyle. You have been
right royal, madam, and your
lovers

Have joyful cause to praise you.

Queen. Will you say it,
Who bear as much part in his blood
as I

Of our dead father's giving? then I
think

No other tongue for love of Murray
slain

Shall sting me though mine own speak
off his head,

Once caught up out of England; nay,
I think

We shall get vantage of your lord's
friend Knox

Ere many days be.

Countess of Argyle. Speed your maj-
esty!

The cord were hallowed that should
silence him.

Queen. Ay, though mine own hands
twist it. To spin hemp

For such a throat, so loud and eloquent,
Should better please me, and seem a

queenlier thing,
Than to weave silk, and flower it with
fine gold.

He hath a tongue to tame a tiger with,
Fright into fierce and violent reverence

The fearfulest earth's monsters. I do
think

I like him better than his creed-fellows
Whose lips are softer toward me; 'tis

some sport
To set my wit to his, and match with
mine

The shrewd and fiery temper of his
spirit

For trial of true mastery: yet to-day
He made me weep, weep mightily — by

faith,

If there be faith in any lips of earth,
I think to live, and laugh at his tears

yet.

Robert Stuart. I would the hand were
on him that might make

His eyes weep red, and drop out of
their rings,

Looking on death. What reason gives
him leave,

What right makes room for him to take
his way

So past men's patience grown so mas-
terful?

Had I one half word's warrant of your
grace,

His tongue should not be long inside
his lips.

Queen. I am no wife of Antony, to
try

My needle's point against his tongue's
edge; yet

I have cause as good as Fulvia's, though
his speech

Ring somewhat short of Roman. Here
is one

That has that southern honey on his lips
Frozen as it seems up with this galling
air,

And not a note left golden, but his
tongue

Nipt with the chill to death as with a
knife

That cuts us short of music.

Countess of Argyle. Yea, my lord,
Why will you so discomfort the good
hour

With tongueless sadness? We have
cause to chide,

That, having cause to sing, find song to
seek

And thought to find it ready.

Rizzio. I have been sad
These two hours back; I know not
what it was

So struck me out of mirth, for I was
merry,

And knew not why.

Queen. Nay, if you love me, sir,
You had reason to be merry with my
mirth

Who am blithe to be found queen over
my foes.

I have been glad all this good day
thereof

Save some few minutes that my subject-
saint

Vexed even to mere intemperance; but
few tears

Wept out that little bitter part of day,
And left it sweet. Have you not heard
men say

This heaviness without a root of fear
Goes oft before some good? now should
there be

Some new thing hard upon us that will
make

All good hearts glad. Have you no
song to mock

The doubt away that mocks you?

Rizzio. At your will.

I am something yet in tune for such a
song

As joy makes out of sorrow, when the
thought

Plays with false grief for joy's sake.
Please you hear it

With such light audience as its worth
is light?

Queen. Ay, such a note should fit me
for this time;

After the tuneless toil of talking day,
A light song lightly brings ill thoughts
asleep.

RIZZIO (sings).^c

*Lord Love went Maying
Where Time was playing,
In light hands weighing
Light hearts with sad;*

*Crowned king with peasant,
Pale past with present,
Harsh hours with pleasant,
Good hopes with bad;*

*Nor dreamed how fleet
Than Time's swift metre,
O'er all things sweeter*

*How clothed with power,
The murderess maiden
Mistrust walks laden*

*With red fruit ruined and
dead white flower.*

*How close behind him
Ere man's faith find him,
How strong to bind him*

*With fears for hands,
Lest once beholden
Of man the golden
God's face embolden*

*All hearts and hands;
For if doubt were not,
Whose sore shafts spare not,
Large life would care not*

*For death's poor hour,
Seeing all life's season
By love's sweet reason*

*Made wise would seem in his
eyes a flower.*

Countess of Argyle. Did you hear
that?

Robert Stuart. What?

Queen. Nothing but sweet words.

Countess of Argyle. I heard a cry 't
the wind as of one hurt.

Arthur Erskine. There is no wind
up, madam.

Queen. Peace, I pray;

It was your own sense mocked you
Hear it through;

There should be more, and sadder.

Countess of Argyle. Nay, I heard.

RIZZIO (*sings*).

*By Love's side flying
As Time went crying
Glad news and lying
In all men's ears,
With blind feet gliding
She came deriding
Their joyous tiding
That ends in tears ;
From Time's side sailing
As Love sank quailing,
Her strong wings sailing
Made all heads cover,
Her wings untethered,
With fleet thoughts feathered,
Made weak the summer and bleak
the flower.*

*Hope found no cover
Wherein to hover,
And Love no lover,
And Joy no place ;
Till when Time creeping
Had left him sleeping,
Love knelt down weeping
Before her face,
And prayed, soul-stricken,
One flower might quicken,
Though spring should sicken
And storm devour ;
She from her bosom
Flung one sere blossom,
Then passed him dead on the last
dead flower.*

Robert Stuart. Hark! some one laughed there.

Queen. What does death i' the song?
Can they not let love live, but must needs make
His grave with singing? 'Tis the trick
of song
That finds no way to end else.

Rizzio. An old trick;
Your merrier songs are mournfuller
sometimes
Than very tears are.

Queen. Do you hear noises still?

Enter DARNLEY.

Who sent you to us?

Darnley. My love to my sweet lady.

[*Kisses her.*

Queen. What feet are theirs behind
you? Who stands there?

Darnley. Nay, nothing, nay, sweet,
nothing.

Queen. I should know —

Judas! [*Seeing RUTHVEN in the door
way.*

Darnley. I tell you —

Ruthven. Let that man come forth;
He hath been here too long.

Queen. What hath he done?

Ruthven. So please your highness,
how he hath done you wrong
To offend the honor of your majesty,
I dare not boldly say; but this I
dare,

He hath done the king your husband's
honor wrong

In this past all the rest, to hinder him
Of the crown matrimonial, which your
grace

Made his by promise. Other wrongs
than this

Are more than I need speak of: for
the lords,

He hath caused you banish a great part
of them,

And the most chief, and at this parlia-
ment

Forefault them as for treason, that him-
self

Who jets here in his cap and damask
gown

Might of your grace be made a lord, and
tread

On men more noble: wherefore with
good cause

For very love I pray your majesty
Make not yourself his buckler who

lacks heart
Save to pluck forth his hanger, and not

strike,
But cower behind, and clasp your gown

for shield.
Stand from before the window, lest

perforce
I haie him hence by the hair.

Queen. Help us, our friends!
Thrust out this death-faced traitor.

Arthur Erskine. Sir, give way.

Robert Stuart. Out of this presence'

Ruthven. Lay no hands on me;
[*Draws.*]
Stand; I will not be handled.

*Enter FAULDONSIDE and SIR
GEORGE DOUGLAS.*

Queen. Out with him!

Rizzio. Save, save me, madam!

Queen. You are within my ward.
Stand from him, sirs; what! treason!
Fauldonside. Nay, then, thus.

[*Putting a pistol to her breast.*]

Queen. Do him no wrong; ye dare
not murder me:

If he have sinned, let justice pass on him.
Fauldonside. This cord shall justify
him.

Rizzio. Help me! help!

Sir George Douglas. Let go the queen.

Rizzio. Help me, my mistress!

Fauldonside. Out!

Queen. Have mercy!

Rizzio. Mercy! nay, I am innocent!
Save me, sweet lady!

Queen. Will ye slay me too?

Fauldonside. Drag him away; pluck
his hands off her.

Rizzio. Help!

[*They force him out.*]

Queen. Why does that sheath sit
empty on your side?

Where is the dagger?

Darnley. Why, I know not where.

Queen. It will be known hereafter; it
shall be

Dear blood to some of you if David's
here

Be spilt, my faithful servant's; but may
God,

My poor true friend, have mercy on
your soul!

Ruthven. Here, take your wife into
your arms, my lord,

And bid her fear not. — Madam, have
no fear;

We had sooner spend the blood of our
own hearts

Than you should suffer harm; and
what we do

Is but your husband's bidding. Let
them pass:

He shall be kept for this time safe
enough

In my lord's chamber here.

Darnley. Ay shall he, safe —
In that same chamber where you used
of old,

Before this fellow grew so in your grace,
To come and seek me; but since he so
fell

In credit with you and familiar use,
Even if I come to yours I find of late
Small entertainment of you, save so
far

As David may sit third with us, and
set

To cards with you even till an hour or
twain

Be gone past midnight.

Queen. I have heard not said
It was a duteous gentlewoman's part
To seek her husband's chamber, but the
man's

To seek the wife when he would aught
with her.

Darnley. Why came you to my cham-
ber, then, at first,
And ever till these few months back
that he

Became familiar with you? or am I
In any part now of my body failed,
To fall out of your grace? or what dis-
dain

Have you of me? or what offence of
mine

Makes you not use me at all times
alike,

Seeing I am willing to do all good
things

That may become a husband to his
wife?

Queen. My lord, of all the shame
here done to me,

You have the fault: for which sake I
henceforth

Shall never be your wife, nor lie with
you,

Nor ever shall have liking of my life
Till I may make you bear as sore a
heart

As I bear now.

Ruthven. Madam, for honor's sake,
Be reasonably and timely reconciled
To your wed lord; and with him take
advice

Of such good friends as love you. Give
me leave:

I am faint, and cannot stand to plead
with you. [Sits.]

Bring me to drink, for God's sake.

Darnley. Give my lord

A cup of wine.

Queen. Is this your malady?

If ye shall slay me or my six-months'
child

By this night's force and fear, my
friends yet live

To wreak me of Lord Ruthven.

Ruthven. Be content.

Queen. When word goes forth how I
am handled here —

What, am I kinless, think you, without
help?

Mine uncles, and my brother king of
France,

All lords of all lands living, all heads
crowned,

Shall be one storm to shake you from
the world;

And the Pope with me, and the Catho-
lic king,

And all that live or of my faith or
blood,

Shall all make way upon you.

Ruthven. I am too mean

That these so many and mighty should
take aim

At one such poor man here as I am.
See,

If you will weigh it worthily yourself,
This is no treason; never till this night

Was so good service done you. For
myself,

I will make answer to God's charge
and man's

How I have served you in it.

Queen. What have I done?

What thing am I, that ye should use me
thus?

O miserable and desertless that I am,
Unkingdomed of mine honor! I that
had

Lordship of land and natural rule of
men

Am poorer here than any landless man,
And weaker than all women. Pray

you, sir,

By what law's sentence am I made
man's thrall?

What lord have I offended that can bid

My face for shame be covered in your
sight?

Whom have I wronged? or who hath
power on me,

What thing soever I be, to do me
wrong?

Who hath given forth judgment on me?
what man's right

Calls me his servant? Nay, there is no
slave

Men strike without a sentence; and ye
strike

Your own right in me and your name
to death

With one self-ruinous violence.

Ruthven. Be at peace;

We strike but your own sickness off
yourself,

Who cut off him to save you: the dis-
ease

That dies of the physician leaves no
cause

That you should curse, but thank him.

Queen. Thank? ay, thank —

God give me grace to give you thanks!
be sure

Ye shall not lack my memory to it, nor
will

To made me worthy of you. What!
no more?

[Exit RUTHVEN.]

I thought his wrath was large enough
for me

To find a murderous part in where to
die,

And share it with my servant. Must I
live?

Sir, you that make death warm between
your lips,

And, silent, let fall murder from your
mouth,

Have you no kiss to kill me? no love
left

To give me poison? Why is he gone
forth?

Hath the hot falsehood eaten through
your tongue?

Speak.

Darnley. Why, I bade him look to
those your friends

That might have risen upon us; hear
you that?

[Noise outside]

There is a clamor of them in the courts,
But naught to help or hurt now. He is gone

To read our will out in the general ear,
And by proclaiming of my share with them

In this their new-born justice to make sure

Men's hearts that hearken; and lest fear shake our friends,

Or ill-will toward us and good-will toward you

Make our foes strong in malice of design,

To warn them of your brother's present speed,

Who must be here with morning: my device,

My trick to win all faiths that hang on him

And tie them to my service with his hand.

So have we all souls instant on our side,

And you no way to wound us: for by this,

Even with the hearing of my name given forth

As parcel of the bond that writes him dead,

Which is now cancelled with his blood-shedding,

This your good town is with us, and your lords

That stood for you with this man fled or dead,

If they dare strike or stand yet. What shift now?

What wit? what craft?

Queen. My friends driven forth the court?

No help upon my side? The town raised too?

Darnley. We had no heart nor wit to work with, ha?

We were your fools, and heartless?

Queen (at the window). Help, all friends!

All good men help your queen here! Ho, my lord,

My lord the Provost!

Darnley. He is raised indeed.

Queen. Help for the queen! help, Provost!

Darnley. Peace, I say;

You may fare worse: these are wild hours.

Voice without. Sit down;

You shall be hewn in pieces if you stir,
And flung into the Nor'-Loch.

Darnley. Nay, be wise;

Pluck not their madness on you.

Queen. Oh, your love!

It shows now kindly in you.

Re-enter RUTHVEN.

Ruthven. All is sped;

The lords of the adverse party being roused up

And hearing with what large applause of men

The reading of our sentence in the bond

And names subscribed, and proclamation made

Of Murray even at heel of the act returned,

Was of all mouths made welcome, in fierce haste

Forth of their lodging fled confusedly
With no more tarriance than to bring their lives

Clear of the press and cry of peril at hand,

And their folk round them in a beaten rank

Hurled all together; so no man being left,—

The earls of Huntley and of Bothwell gone,—

To lift a hand against the general peace,

The townsmen; of their surety satisfied,

Brake up with acclamation of content
For the good comfort done them in this deed.

Queen. What have ye made my servant?

Ruthven. A dead dog.

His turn is done of service.

Darnley. Yea, stark dead?

Ruthven. They stabbed him through
and through with edge on edge

Till all their points met in him; there

he lies,

Cast forth in the outer lodge, a piteous knave

And poor enough to look on.

Queen. I am content.

Now must I study how to be revenged.

Darnley. Nay, think not that way: make it not so much;

Be warned, and wiser.

Queen. Must I not, my lord?

You have taught me worthier wisdom than of words;

And I will lay it up against my heart.

ACT II. — BOTHWELL.

Time, from March 10, 1566, to February 9, 1567.

SCENE I. — THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER.

Enter DARNLEY and ARTHUR ERSKINE, severally.

Darnley. Is the queen risen?

Arthur Erskine. She has not slept, my lord.

They say she is in some peril of mishap

Through the sore handling of this violent night,—

Mortal mishap it may be.

Darnley. Ay! who say it?

What should be mortal to her? she was not sick,

Nor near enough her danger.

Arthur Erskine. I am no leech:

Haply the fright of murderous menaces

And noise of swords is held medicinal; The savor of a slain friend comfortable,

And his blood balm: if these be healthful things,

You have given her weakness physic.

Enter the QUEEN.

Queen. Ah, our lord!

Comes he with death about him? I could take it

As readily as condemned men take reprieve,

For of a life much deadlier than itself

Death would relieve me.

Darnley. I am come to bring you help.

Queen. You are ever helpful, even at all needs good,

For stroke or speech, good always. I am weak;

Let me have execution swift or soft;

Here is no strength to suffer.

Darnley. Sit, and rest.

Queen. Nay, I can stand; or should I kneel, my plight

Were one with my new fortune. You may go:

I have but private penitence to do, And privy grace to get me; for indeed I were stark mad to hope by any mean

For public pardon; I am condemned, and have

No hope but of such pity as dead men gain

Who living found no grace in the great world.

[*Exit ARTHUR ERSKINE.*]

Now, what death, sir?

Darnley. You think not as you speak; Your thought has other business than your tongue,

And death has no part in it.

Queen. I am assured

I must not live.

Darnley. Whose doom has passed on you?

Not mine; I would not have you go in fear:

You may be safe as I am.

Queen. As you, my lord?

I think I may, and yet may chance but find

A little day of surety.

Darnley. By mine honor,

My word and place of sovereignty is pledged

For your fair usage; they that unseat you

Shall find no king in me.

Queen. Nay, I think not.

Darnley. As they would have me friend and firm to them,

I told them, they should use you royally,

No state or privilege plucked off you; nay,

I have no thought by stolen strength of yours

To increase myself out of your weakness; only

I would have royalty remade in you,
And in your honor an honorable part;
See the state in you and the name shine fair,

And in your praise mine own praise perfected

As parcel of it, and in your good fame
Mine own fame stablished; as from your repute

Shaken or sullied, my name too takes soil,

And in your insufficiency I wax weak,
So would I have the grace I gain and strength

Redound to you-ward; who being queen indeed,

I cannot seem unkingly.

Queen. 'Tis well thought.

It was my curse to know not in good time

How high a sense and royal of itself
I had in you so near me.

Darnley. That your thought,

Misdeeming me worth no more weight with you,

Hath brought us to this breach. Now lies it in you

To make all whole; these lords that in my name

And for mine ends and with my leave rose up

To rid out peril and scandal from us all,
And make red-handed witness of themselves

Against the shame and scathe of royalty,

Are not the traitors of your thought, but keep

Faith flawless toward the personal empire here

And spirit of rule, dishonoring not the law

By forceful chastisement of secret breach

That did it bloodless violence; this blood shed

Must heal indeed the privy hurt of law
And all but death of kingship, in such pass

Wasted and wounded; but no hand of theirs

Would stab through you your holy majesty,

Cut off all life of law with yours, and make

Authority die with you one visible death;

No thought put out your office, though yourself

Were found come short thereof, to leave this land

A kingless kingdom; wherefore with good-will

I counsel you make peace with their designs

And friends with mine intent, which for us both

Is but all power and honor.

Queen. So you see it;

But were your eyes no flatterers of themselves,

The sight were other: yet for my poor part

I cannot care though power be out of sight,

Save that mine honor visibly is marred
By wreck in you of either; for indeed

Nor power nor honor shall hang on to you

If you must wear them but at will of men,

And by strange leave of chance authority

Reign or not reign. But all concerns me not:

Rule as you may, be lord of that you can,

I can contend not with your lords, or you,

Their master-servant. Pardon me, I am weak,

A feeble simple woman, without stay,
And witless of your worth; yet I might fear

Their policies were no good friends of yours,

Could we see all. Men's hearts are manifold,

Not made of glass like women's such as mine,

At once transpicuous and perceptible
To eyes like yours that look their faults through; yet

Perchance you see more faults than lie
there, spots

That are not natural to us; or make
too much

Of our light thoughts and weakness;
yet, your pardon:

You have reason in it, being more wise
than we,

And stronger in your regency of soul;

It may be you do well to bear me hard,

And I do ill who think to counsel you;

'Tis no great matter; for in no great
while

My weakness will be medicine to itself,

And end as I do: no default of mine

But must by dying be curable; and
God knows

I little think to live.

Darnley. Why, have no fear;

You see I stand 'twixt you and all such
threat.

Queen. Nay, I see not; but though
you be my friend,

How far soever you stand out for me,
There is one threat that no man's help

in the world

Can bring to nothing: here it speaks
in me

Mortal; I know the word inevitable

That without breath or sound has called
me dead;

I would not plead against it.

Darnley. Nay, you dream;

You jest or dream.

Queen. I do not: I am dead.

What! have you slain in jest, or in a
dream

Have I seen death, and felt him in my
flesh,

Felt my blood turn, and my veins fill
with death,

And the pang pass and leave me as I
am,

Dead? for my state is pangless, and my
pain

Perished: I have no life to bring forth
pain,

Or painful fruit of life; I think in pity
God willed one stroke of sheer mor-
tality

Should kill all possible pain and fear
in me,

All after-chance of ill; I cannot die

Twice, and can live not with my dead
self here

Violently slain. I am sure I have no
child.

I would but pray, if I had breath to pray,
For mere shame's sake and pity's, I

might have

My women with me; and was not born
to want

What our most poor bare natural
womanhood

Seeks not in vain of meanest people:
more

I seek of no man's mercy.

Darnley. You shall have it;

But this is fear and shaken heart in
you —

I trust not very danger.

Queen. I that know

Must bear the peril and the sense alike,

And patiently can bear, so but I have

Hope of your heart made soft towards
me; sir,

Howe'er I have been untoward and
confident

In my blind state and sovereign folly,
now

God knows me if I have not need of
love

Who have so much of pardon.

Darnley. Is this sure,

Such instant and such perilous press of
time, —

Or but your thought it may be?

Queen. Nay, my thought!

Is it my thought I am stricken to my
death?

Is it my thought you have no pity of
me?

Is it my thought I had looked at other
time

For other joy of childbed, and such
pangs

As bring glad women honor? not this
death

That sunders me from fruit of mine own
years

And youth and comfort, and mere natu-
ral hope,

And love that looks on many a worse
than me?

Is it my thought that for small fault
of mine,

And little lack of love and duteousness,
I am brought to shame and mortal
chastisement?

Is it my thought love is not dead in me
For all this chastening? and my peni-
tence

Wherewith I weep on my least wrong-
doings past,

And faith wherewith I look for pardon
yet,

For grace of you—is all this but my
thought?

Darnley. By heaven, I will not have
you wronged of them.

You shall live safe and honorably.

Queen. My lord,

Who lives in such times honorably or
safe,

When change of will and violence
mutable

Makes all state loose and rootless?
Think you, men

Who have dipped their hands in this
red act with you

Will, as they wash them, so wash off
their hearts

The burning spot of raw malignity

And fire and hunger of ambition made
So proud and full of meat, so rank in
strength,

So grossly fed and fattened with fresh
blood?

Is it for love of your name more than
mine

These men that fought against my love
of you,

And made rebellious wars on my free
choice,

Smite now my very head and crown of
state

In this night's hot and present stroke?
Be sure

It is the throne, the name, the power in
us,

That here is stabbed and bleeds from
such a wound

As draws out life of you no less than
me

If you be part of majesty indeed.

Yea, howsoe'er you be now borne in
hand,

They will but use you as an axe to
smite,

A brand to set on fire the house of
state

And in the doing be burnt up of itself.

Why, do but think with now more
temperate blood

What are they that have helped you to
this deed?

What friends to you? what faith toward
royalty,

And what good-will and surety of sound
mind,

Have you found in them? or how put
in proof?

What bond have their loves given you
to confirm

Their hearts toward you stable? Nay,
if this

Be all my pledge for honor and safe
life,

They slide upon a slippery ground in-
deed.

Darnley. The pledge is mine, not
theirs: you have my word;

No warrant of their giving, but of me.

What ails you to go yet in fear of them?
Queen. Alas! I know not whom I
need yet fear.

What men were they who helped you
to this deed?

Yet it avails not me to know. I think
The fierce first root of violence was
not set

Of you nor of your uncles, though I
know

They of your mother's kinship love me
not;

But though their hearts, albeit one
blood with yours,

Be bitter toward me, yet being of your
blood

I would fain think them not so hard;
and yet

It was no gentle sight I had of them,
Nor usage; I can see their eyes burn
still,

And their brows meet against me.
Such a sight

Again might wind all suffering up in
me,

And give it full release.

Darnley. It was their plot;

That is, for love of me they felt the
offence

Eat at their hearts. I did not set them
on;
But wrath and shame's suspicion for
my sake
Edged and envenomed; then your poli-
cies too,
And injuries done the popular weal, the
state
So far mishandled, — this was all men's
talk,
Mine uncle's chiefly, Ruthven's, and his
word
Was hot in the ear of Maitland and
Argyle,
Showing the wrong done and the further
fear,
More wide in issue and large in likeli-
hood
Than all wrong done already; nay, and
plain;
You would have given the state up to
strange hands,
And for strange ends; no dreaming
doubt of mine,
But very vision, proof: they held it so;
And, by my faith, I with them.
Queen. Morton too?
Was not his wit part of your wisdom?
Darnley. Ay;
Why, all heads highest, all subtlest,
could not choose
But be one judgment and one counsel
here,
In such a biting need; yea, common
fools,
Poor senseless knaves might see it.
Queen. Yea, visibly.
The sharpest wits and hands put armor
on
To go forth strong against me; little
doubt
But fools and ignorance and the com-
mon mouth,
The very dust o' the street, the dross
of man,
Must needs take fire with blowing of
such wind,
And stir at such men's passage: their
mere feet
Moving would raise me up such ene-
mies
From the bare ground. Ruthven —
you said his breath

Was first to heat men's hearing with
strange words
And set their hearts on edge; and at
his touch
The quick-eyed Maitland and loose-
souled Argyle,
Keen to catch fire or fear from other
men's;
And the full-counselled Morton — by
my life
(That's but a little oath now) I think
strange
To be at all alive, and have such men
So sore unfriends and secret, and their
wits
So sharp to set upon so slight a thing.
How grew this up amongst you?
Darnley. Why, you see it;
No need to set men on; their swords
were made
Of your own follies; yet have comfort;
I,
That was so little made of, so less
worth,
In your late judgment, will alone be
guard
And buckler of you; come what coun-
sel may,
It shall not hold against you with my
will,
And cannot work without.
Queen. Nay, that were hard.
I thank you; but what counsel will they
take,
Think you, which way to deal with me?
My soul
Is womanly distempered and distract
With doubts of them: no fear of your
good mind,
Of your firm love and fruitful; but,
alas!
I am no strong man as you my guard,
and ache
With new faint fear of their fresh
angers: then,
This watch on me, my ways and rooms
barred up,
No help nor issue, shakes and sickens
me
With pangs for every stroke in the
hour, that says
I am so much more time prisoner.
Darnley. For your guard,

It must be later taken off; the rest
 I will find mean of help for. They are
 now
 In council with your brother, new
 brought home
 With seal from me of pardon to reverse
 Your fresh and rash attainder, in my
 name
 Now cancelled and made strengthless;
 and I think
 There must three judgments be debated
 of, —
 Whether, for hurt done to the common
 state
 And treason to succession, you must
 bear
 Penance of death, or life's imprison-
 ment,
 Which fear not I will have them put in
 form,
 Nor see it pass upon you; the third
 mean
 Is for some season that you be in ward
 In Stirling Castle, till your warrant
 given
 And free consent to this late justice
 done,
 And to the new faith stablished in the
 realm
 By right and rule of law, religiously,
 And to mine own investiture as king.
 Now for no fear at all or doubt of them,
 But very love and good desire toward
 you,
 I will go plead your part, and take them
 sign
 Of seasonable submission; with which
 word
 I doubt not but to reconcile their
 thoughts,
 And bring their loves back bounden to
 your feet.
Queen. Neither do I doubt. Let
 them draw this bond,
 I will set hand to what they will of me.
 To seal you king needs now no grace
 of mine,
 Hardly my leave; and for their faith,
 it has
 Too firm a foot for my poor power to
 shake,
 Had I the will now molten in me strong
 As ere the fire of fierce necessity

Had made it soft and edgeless; for
 their deed,
 Say, if they hold my word of pardon
 worth
 More than mere scorn, I am bound to
 thank them, being
 Masters of me and of my wrath or will,
 And needing show me no such courtesy;
 And if it please them take mine oath
 and hand
 To sign them safe, and mark them from
 all charge
 Sackless and scatheless, let them take
 it; alas!
 I thought well they might rather take
 my life,
 And yet I think well they would take
 indeed
 But for your safeguard of me; would
 they not
 Slay me? nay, by your honor tell me —
 nay,
 I know they would, had I no guard in
 you,
 Slay me defenceless.
Darnley. Have no fear: I have
 sworn
 They shall not touch you roughly.
Queen. Swear again,
 That I may quite rest confident; and
 yet
 Swear not; I would not seem to hold
 you fast
 To your own peril; better were I dead
 Than you fell in their danger for my
 sake.
 Ah! and I know not, I may hardly think
 I have you surely on my side.
Darnley. By heaven,
 You shall want nothing of my help or
 love.
Queen. How had you heart to go so
 near my death?
Darnley. I had no mind to hurt you.
Queen. None? well, none —
 I will not think it; yet I was nigh dead.
 You saw my very death here at my
 breast
 Where your child is not yet — I did
 not think
 To feel instead there murder's iron lips
 For his soft suckling mouth.
Darnley. Come, think not of it

Queen. I had not time to think of it indeed.

But I think now you will have hardly power

To match your will to save me, if their will

Shall yet be mortal to me: then I saw
You had not power, or had not will;
and now

I know not which you have yet.

Darnley. They shall find
I have power enough and will to turn
them.

Queen. Well —

I lean, then, on your hand. If you were
mine,

Though they were subtler and more
strong in hate,

They should not hold me here in peril.

Darnley. How?

Queen. No matter, so their guard
were less on me.

Darnley. You would take flight,
then?

Queen. Ay, with you for wing

To lift me out of prison.

Darnley. Whither?

Queen. Nay,

I am but the fool of your keen flattering
wit,

Who let you see my little hope that
lives

To see my some day sunnier: yet God
knows

Without light of you it were lustre-
less.

I can look forth not, or heave up my
hand,

But with your help to stay me.

Darnley. Surely no,

As you stand now, you cannot; and I
were

A faithless fool to mine own fortune, if
I loosed you out of sight for wanton-
ness,

Who have you now in hand: but for
all this

It may be flight were no such unwise
mean

To assure our free and mutual power
on them,

And show them simply subject; as it
is,

They have some show of hold on us
which makes

Our reign and freedom questionable
and slight:

I see some reason in it.

Queen. Why, do you think

That you being here their gaoler in
their eye

Can be their king too, or not rather
they

Lords both of gaol and warder? they
will hold you

But as the minister of their power on
me,

Of no more office than a doorkeeper
Nor honor than their headsman; but

fled hence

You are very king indeed, by your own
hand,

Lord of the life you give and majesty,
By no man's furtherance and no grant

of theirs

Made pensioner and proxy for their
reign

Who should bear rule and you the sem-
blance, worn

As mask of all their faces, glove of
hands,

And hollow trumpet blown of all their
mouths,

But mine and all their free and sove-
reign king.

Darnley. Why, so I say; they must
be borne in hand.

Look you, we must not set their fears
on edge;

They shall suspect not: I will take
them word,

And bring them to you for your bond.

Queen. Meantime,

I will but walk an hour here hand in
hand

With my good brother; let me speak
to him

While they shall draw the schedule.

Darnley. I will bid him

Attend you, and your women; but be
sure

You take him not to counsel: he is
wise,

And full of malice; let him not be
part

Of our new mind.

Queen. He shall not.

Darnley. But you smile :
What should he do to know it ?

Queen. He shall not know.

Darnley. Well, you shall see him,
and they take off your guard ;
I will make sure : but when and by
what means

Think you to fly ?

Queen. To-night.

Darnley. God help your wit !
To-night ?

Queen. Before the change of watch ;
I have said :

Weak as I stand, and burdened, and
soul-spent,

I will be hence. Mistrust me not for
strength ;

My soul shall make my body like itself,
A servant armed to wait upon my
thought

And page my purpose as its minister
Till the end be held in hand. This
guard removed,

I will find ways out to win forth to-
night,

Fear not, and servants. Go now to
the lords

With all submissive mild report of me,
And bring them to receive my word
and hand

To confirmation of what bond they
please

For pardon and possession of their
will ;

And for your kingship—sir, assure
yourself

That in few hours it shall be seen and
sure

You shall need never seek their loves
again,

Or hands to help you to it, or tongues
to cry,

Nor be called king by will of any man,
Nor lord by choice of any friend on
earth.

Darnley. Nay, I would heed no
voices.

Queen. And be sure
You shall not build your power on
loves of theirs,

Nor live by their election. Go, and
thrive :

Think how my faith and hope and love
in you

Find all their rest and stronghold, and
on them

Set up your trust and standard of your
strength.

[*Exit DARNLEY.*]

So much is done ; go thou, then, first to
death ;

For from this hour I have thee.—Heart,
lie still,

Till I may make those mightier traitors
mine

That shall be swords for me to smite
him with,

And then be free as fire.

Enter MARY BEATON.

Hast thou no news ?

Mary Beaton. The lord of Bothwell
lies at secret ward

To bear you forth of peril here by
force ;

He has gathered up his men beyond
the walls

To break this guard upon you when
you will,

If at your suit it shall not be with-
drawn ;

Here is his token brought me privily
For your own hand.

Queen. No, in my heart it is,
My love and lord, thy token ; this poor
heart,

That, ere mine ear is smitten with thy
name,

Hears it, and turns to springing fire.
What thanks

Would I not rather pay than these of
words

For this thy loving speed ? Yet send
him these,

And bid him, I would fain say come
but wait

Till I have tried my traitors ; if my
tongue

Win them to slack their hold on me
to-night,

We may speed surelier ; if their hands
hold fast,

Then let him smite and slay and set me
free.

I would have all their heads here in
my lap,

Tell him, not one or two slain suddenly,
 That their blood shed may seem not spilt by chance,
 Nor lost and won in hazard of affray,
 But sacrificed by judgment, and their names
 Who would have made of royalty in me
 Ruin, and marred the general name of king,
 Shall with their lives be perfectly put out,
 Royally ruined; wherefore if I may
 I will steal forth with subtle help of words,
 Not break their bonds with violence; in which hope
 Bid him watch close.

[Exit MARY BEATON.

And when his watch is done
 It will be morning, and the sun shall break
 As fire for them that had their hour by night
 And light for wrath to see them and to slay.

Re-enter ARTHUR ERSKINE, introducing MURRAY.

Arthur Erskine. Madam, my lord of Murray.

Queen. Ah! my brother,
 Had you been here, they had not used me thus.

Murray. I am sorry, madam, such things should be done
 As even the strain of sharp necessity
 Can make but fierce and bitter.

Queen. Is this all?
 Nay, it was necessary then and just,
 Or I must seem and strive to think it was,

If you say so. But in my present sight,
 Now when a feather's or a flower's weight borne

Might make life stoop within me, sense break down,

All strong capacities of nature fail;
 Now when the hardest heart with iron bound

Might turn to very mercy for my sake,
 Here in mine eye to do my friend to death—

For howsoe'er ye hold him, yet being dead

I will not say but he was friend of mine

Who lies now dead and slaughtered,— nay, by heaven,

I will not cast that name of friend away
 Because the man my friend is slain for me, —

I say, to kill him at my knee, to stain
 An unborn child's brow with his murdered blood,

To affray with sanguine hands, shake with sheer blows,

The weak and holy warders of the womb,

The reverence and remembrance of us all

For that which bare us hidden before birth

And after was called mother, — oh, this deed,

This, though all law were cast out of the world,

All grace forgotten, — this, you will not say

But they did ill who did it. What! you weep?

These tears are made of our dear father's blood,

Who left in each of us such part of him
 As must yearn each toward other, and divide

At need their mutual suffering: I knew well

I need not fear to find not in your heart
 Some natural seed of comfort.

Murray. That I weep

I take no shame, to see you; but mine eyes

Receive more comfort than their tears can give

To see, for all this rash and ruthless night,

Yet you stand up unwounded, and your heart

Is left you to put spirit in your speech
 Not like a sick man's. If you have no hurt,

No hurt is done, though they did violently;

For this man's life was as a present death

To the well-being and peace of all your
state,
Which, by the force of justice done on
him,
Stands now in surety. I would pray
you make
Your profit of your pain herein, being
wise,
As you well may; for this was not the
man
That you saw slain, but the man's
policy,
Stabbed through with all their daggers;
and you see
How it lies dead and outcast. I be-
seech you,
For your own love and honor of high
rule,
Set not your heart toward it to raise it
up
That men would bury, lest the grave-
yard reek
Of dead men's craft and strange men's
creeds brought back
Prove poison to you.

Queen. I will do what men will.
I must not die, then?

Murray. There are those would have
it
For scandal and offence cast on the
realm
By shame done to the popular common-
wealth
In majesty made shameful; as they
say
Through you it hath been, and your
dealings known
With this dead friend: some that would
leave you life
Spake of life spent in sharp imprison-
ment
Unto your death's day: but by mine
award
You are quit of either danger; you
must live
But under guard till you by word ap-
prove
This man's despatch for necessary and
just,
Submit yourself to call your husband
king,
And own the true faith rooted in this
realm

For lawful and for sovereign here of
rule.

So much you shall.

Queen. Nay, I will more than this.

I will seal now what you will have me
seal,

What bond soever: let them come to
me,

Who wrought this murderous matter
but last night,

That I may sign their pardon with my
tongue

Ere they can crave or threaten. Let
them come:

So shall my perfect purpose be more
plain

Freely in all things to submit myself —
I have your word already — to their
will:

Ay, even with all my new submissive
heart,

As else I cannot choose; for what am I,
That I should think much to submit
myself?

Murray. You shall do wisely to keep
faith with them,

And make your word your action's
measure: so

Shall hearts now loosened from you be
made fast,

And love reclaimed wait on you loyally
Through all your land's length. See,
the lords are come.

Enter DARNLEY, MORTON, and RUTH-
VEN.

Queen. Good morrow, sirs; ye gave
me no good night,

Yet are you welcome even as life or
death

Were welcome to me, coming with your
will:

For without love of my good lords my
life

Were scarce worth holding out against
their will;

But, if it please them I should die not
yet,

For their love's sake I give it welcome.
Sirs,

I have heard what terms ye lay upon
mine head,

And bow beneath them willingly, being
sure

It is but meet I should submit myself,
 It is but fit mere majesty bow down
 To take the burden by good men and
 wise
 Imposed upon it; nor shall this be
 hard:
 For what ye did so suddenly and swift,
 If there be power of pardon in me, here
 With as good heart even as ye did the
 deed
 Do I forgive it; nay, I should give you
 thanks
 That ye vouchsafe of me to be forgiven;
 For what am I among you? Let the
 bond
 Be drawn between us presently to sign,
 While for an hour's space I will walk
 and wait
 Here with my noble brother, hand in
 hand,
 And heart reposed on heart, eyes an-
 swering eyes,
 With pure plain faith: for what now in
 the world
 Should lies or dumb dissembling profit
 me,
 Though I were natural liar? as I do
 trust
 Ye shall not find me, but most faithful;
 yet,
 If I were falser than the foam of the
 sea,
 And wilfuller than wind, what should I
 do,
 Being yours, to mock you and myself,
 and lie
 Against mine own life? for ye see me,
 sirs,
 How I stand bare between you, without
 strength,
 At your mere mercy, with no friend on
 earth
 If ye will be mine unfriends; and I
 think
 To live but by your grace and leave,
 who might,
 If ye were minded, speak me out of life
 Or sign me dead with smiling; I were
 mad
 To play with lies, who feel your hands
 on me
 So heavy as they are, and have no hope
 Save to be pitied and believed of you.

I pray you, then, have faith in me, who
 live
 In your faith only, and, if it fail me here,
 Must die the lowliest death in all the
 world,
 And no man's hand to help me.
Darnley. She says truth:
 There is no hand.
Morton. Madam, though faith stand
 fast,
 Yet fear hath something here to say of
 you,
 And wisdom to remember. We must
 think
 That what is done in service of yourself
 You cannot hold good service when it
 comes
 So masked in blood, so vizarded like
 death,
 As this of ours doth; and that yet in
 time
 You may find mean to wreak your
 wrath on us
 For having strangely served you, and
 perforce
 Given desperation and the dangerous
 time
 So desperate a deliverance from de-
 spair.
 We have saved you in this service done
 the state,
 Who must have else been broken in the
 breach
 Of the state's order and the popular
 law,
 By this man living violently misused;
 But cannot hope yet for such thanks of
 you
 As even the deed deserves whose fierce
 despatch
 Has shaken you with thunder, and its
 flame
 Still makes your eyes blind to the good
 work done,
 And sharp need felt of it: so must this
 be,
 And so must we take heed lest, being
 yet blind,
 We give you scope and mean to hurt
 yourself.
Queen. I did not think the thing was
 yet alive
 That could fear me.

Darnley. Nay, look you, she says
right:

We have no room to fear her.

Queen. Lo, my lords,

How dangerous and how strong a thing
it is

That threatens here your state and
safety! see,

It is no less than woman, and unarmed,
Half dead, unfriended, hard on child-
bearing,

Naked of arms or means: it were not
wise

To leave unguarded, without spies or
swords

About her path, so great a danger; yea,
Wise men would rather fear her force
too much,

Than good men show compassion. Do
your wills:

I am well content to know you wise,
and so

To bear what hard or lighter weight ye
please:

How sore soever, God knows, I believe
It shall not long afflict me.

Murray. In my mind,

It now shall less distract the general
eye

With apprehension of strange times
and strife,

To see the ways again made clear, and
gates

Not crowded up with guard.

Darnley. Why, so I said.

Ruthven. So I say not. Bear with
me though I seem

Less confident or free of heart than
men,

Whose minds are gentle as their names,
should be

In things of common care: what hurt
may come

By fault of us, we know not, but we
know

It is no private peril; if we err,
Not we nor ours must only ache for
it,

But the whole popular heart of this
great land

Must bleed and break for our false
friendship shown,

And confident remission of our cause

And very duty toward her, through
mere wish

To be called gentle toward her ene-
mies.

Queen. I am her enemy, then: where
lies my strength?

What field? what weapon? how shall
we make war,

Take truce and break it, with what
equal face

Stand brow to brow for battle? By
this hand,

I knew not yet how strong it was, nor
worth

How many hands of swordsmen; were
this true,

I might wax proud to be so terrible,
Seeing in such great men's eyes so great

a fear,

And only mine own fearful face therein
As in a mirror shadowed.

Darnley. 'Tis mere truth:

We should be shamed to seem in fear
of her.

Yea, made a mockery in men's eyes and
mouths

For base and blind misgiving.

Ruthven. You, my lords

And equals with me in the proof of
years,

In the age of counsel and experience
borne

Of common service done our natural
state,

Shall best pass judgment, if in hate or
fear

I speak for mine own ends or enmities
To turn your hearts from honor. For

the queen,

As she shall be toward God, so I toward
her

Would be fast friend and servant; but
wherein

She is not friend with heaven nor with
the state,

I were no friend to serve her, nor to say
There were no danger and no sin to

serve.

Ye must all think I think not to live
long;

And being so signed of sickness for my
grave

With such a mortal seal, I speak alive

As one being dead that speaketh : if ye
lose

The grace of God here won by your
own hands,

The power ye have to serve him, and
the effect

Of his good hour, through negligence
of will,

Or pride or pity, ye shall see the state
Break from your hands, and, for one

devil cast out,
Seven entered in its body. Sirs, take

heed:
The least thing lightly overlooked or

done
May undo all things wrought. Keep

fast your guards;
By the king's counsel if they be with-

drawn,
Upon his head that bade them go shall

rest
What bloodshed ever follows: yet in

time
Think nothing weak that is not with us;
each

May have some sting or weapon of it-
self

That till sloth feel it sees not.

Queen. A wise rule:
So should the wary wolf pen up the

lambs,
The falcon set good guard upon the

wren,
For fear of teeth or talons

Murray. We will give
To the king's hand the bond for yours

to sign:
Meantime all ease and reverence shall

you have,
And freedom for your household folk to

serve
As best your need may bid them.

Queen. Sirs, farewell.
I will not pray you do but what ye will,

Which shall seem wisely to me. — Let
me have

Word of their instant sentence. [*Aside*
to DARNLEY.]

Darnley (aside). With all speed.
[*Exeunt DARNLEY, MURRAY, MORTON,*

and RUTHVEN.
Queen. Where are my servants

Standen and Traquair?

Arthur Erskine. At hand to serve
your highness.

Queen. Ah, to serve!
My highness is brought low, too low to

claim
Service of men; if I may find but love

Or only pity of any, this shall be
All utmost service I desire of them.

I have but my sorrows to my subjects
left,

And these rebellious; yet I keep what
state

And rule I may upon them. Tell those
twain

I pray their patience lend me but the
time

To hear what I would have them, and
to choose

If they will do it for pity.

Arthur Erskine. Think them here,
And your will done already. [*Exit.*

Queen. Yea, my will!
What knowest thou may my will be?

By this light,
I feel a heat and hurry of the heart

That burns like joy; my blood is light
and quick,

And my breath comes triumphantly as
his

That has long labored for a moun-
tainous goal,

And sets fast foot on the utmost cliff
of all.

If ere the race be run my spirit be glad,
What when it puts the palm of peril

on,
And breathes clear air, and conquers?

Nay, I think
The doubt itself and danger are as food

To strengthen and bright wine to
quicken me,

And lift my heart up higher than my
need,

Though that be high upon me.

Re-enter ERSKINE with TRAQUAIR
and STANDEN.

Now, my friends,
Ye come unlike to courtiers, come to

serve
Me most unlike a queen: shall I think

yet
I have some poor part in your memories
safe,

And you some care of what I was, and
 thought
 How I fare now? Shall I take up my
 hope,
 That was cast down into the pit of
 death,
 To keep the name God gave me, and
 the seal
 That signs me royal, by your loves and
 faiths
 Recrowned and reinstated? Say but no,
 Or say but naught, this hope of mine
 and heart
 Are things as dead as yesterday: my
 cause
 Lies in your lips, to comfort or con-
 found,
 As ye see reason. Yet, as power is
 yours,
 So let remembrance in you be for light
 To see the face of the time by; so let
 faith,
 Let noble pity and love be part of you,
 To make you mindful what a cause it is
 That ye must put in judgment, and
 what life
 For fame or shame to you through all
 time born
 Ensues upon your sentence; for ye
 choose
 If ye will match my dangers with your
 faiths,
 And help me helpless with your hearts,
 who lie
 By grief and fear made heartless; or
 lend hand
 To make my weakness weaker, and
 break down
 My broken wall of sovereignty; which
 now
 We wot were no sore labor.

Standen. Let him die

As heartless toward the grace of God,
 who hath

No heart in him to give its blood for
 yours!

Traquair. So say we all your ser-
 vants.

Queen. Did I know it?

Methinks I knew, when I bade send for
 you,

Ye should so say. Ah, friends! I had
 no fear

But I should find me friends in this
 fierce world,
 Or I had died unfriended. Shall I
 thank you
 For being the true men and the kind
 ye are,
 Or take your service thankless, since I
 thought
 Ye could not else, being young and of
 your kinds,
 But needs must be my help? ye have
 not hearts
 To strike, but at men weaponed; ye
 would not
 Lay hard hand on a woman weak with
 child,
 A sick sad woman that was no man's
 queen
 Of all that stood against her; yet her son,
 The unborn thing that pleads again
 with you
 As it could plead not with them, this
 dumb voice,
 This sightless life and sinless, was their
 king's,

If ever they would let it come to life.
 Lo, here their aim was; here the wea-
 ons went,

That should have stabbed to death the
 race of kings,

And cut their stem down to the root;
 here, here

The pistol's mouth that bruised my
 breast, the hand

That struck athwart my shoulder, found
 their mark,

Made here their point to shoot at: in
 my womb

By them the bud of empire should have
 died,

That yet by you may live, and yet give
 thanks

For flower and fruit to them that saved
 the seed.

Standen. They shall die first.

Traquair. Command us what next
 way

There is to serve you: though the way
 were fire,

We would be through it.

Queen. To-night, then, at first watch
 I purpose with the man's help—nay,
 what name

Shall his be now? king, husband, or,
 God help,
 King's father? — with the man that you
 called king
 As I called husband, to win forth of
 bonds
 By the close covered passage under-
 ground
 That by strange turns and strait blind
 working ways
 Winds up into the sovereign cemetery
 Whose dust is of my fathers; there-
 without
 Wait you with horse; and when you see
 us rise
 Out of the hollow earth among the
 dead,
 Be ready to receive and bear us thence.
 Some two hours' haste will speed us to
 Dunbar,
 Where friends lie close, and whence
 with sudden strength
 I trust to turn on these good lords
 again.
 Do this for such poor love's sake as
 your queen's,
 And if there be thanks worthy in the
 world,
 Them shall she give; not silver, sirs,
 nor gold,
 Nor the coined guerdon that is cast on
 churls
 To coin them into service; but a heart,
 If not worth love, yet loving, and a
 faith
 That will die last of all that dies in me,
 And last of all remembrances foregone
 Let your names go. God speed you,
 and farewell.

SCENE II. — RUINS OF THE ABBEY OF
 HOLYROOD.

Enter ARTHUR ERSKINE, TRAQUAIR,
 and STANDEN.

Standen. It must be time; the moon
 is sick and slow

That should by this be higher.

Arthur Erskine. It is your eye
 Whose sight is slow as sickness; for
 the moon

Is seasonable and full: see where it
 burns

Between the bare boughs and the
 broken tombs
 Like a white flower whose leaves were
 fire: the night
 Is deep and sharp wherein it hangs,
 and heaven
 Gives not the wind a cloud to carry,
 nor
 Fails one faint star of all that fill their
 count
 To lend our flight its comfort; we shall
 have
 Good time of heaven and earth.

Traquair. How shall the steeds
 Be shared among us?

Arthur Erskine. If she keep her
 mind,
 My English gelding best shall bear the
 queen,
 And him the Naples courser. Hark!
 they come.

Standen. It was a word said of the
 wind to hear

What earth or death would answer.
 These dead stones

Are full of hollow noises, though the
 vault

Give tongue to no man's footfall: when
 they come,

It will speak louder. Lo, how straight
 that star

Stands over where her face must break
 from earth

As it hath broken! it was not there
 before,

But ere she rise is risen. I would not
 give

The third part of this night between us
 shared

For all the days that happiest men
 may live,

Though I should die by morning.

Traquair. Till she come,
 I cannot choose but with my fears take
 thought,

Though all be after her sweet manner
 done

And by her wise direction, what strange
 ways

And what foul peril with so faint a
 guard

Must of so tender feet be overpast
 Ere she win to us.

Arthur Erskine. All these with laughing lips
Shall she pass through; the strength and spring of soul
That set her on this danger will sustain
Those feet till all her will and way be won.

Her spirit is to her body as a staff,
And her bright fiery heart the traveller's lamp
That makes all shadow clear as its own light.

Enter from the vaults the QUEEN and DARNLEY.

Queen. Here come the wind and stars at once on us;
How good is this good air of that full heaven
That drives the fume back of the sepulchres,
And blows the grave away! Have no more fear;
These are no dead men.

Darnley. Nay, I fear no dead;
Nothing I fear, of quick or dead, but God.

Shall I not go before you?

Queen. Not a foot.
See you, my friends, what valiant hearts are here,

My lord's and mine, who hardly have crept forth,

In God's fear only, through the charnel-house,

Among the bones and skulls of ancient kings

That thought not shame to stand for stumbling-stones

In their poor daughter's way, whose heart had failed,

But that his hardier heart held up her feet,

Who even if winds blew did not shrink nor shake

For fear of aught but God. The night is kind,

And these March blasts make merry with the moon

That laughs on our free flight. Where stand your steeds?

Arthur Erskine. Madam, hard by in shadow of the stones;
Please you, this way.

Queen. I will to horse with you.

Darnley. No, but with me.

Queen. It is not my good will.

Ride you alone, and safer.—Friend, your arm.

SCENE III.—MURRAY'S LODGING IN HOLYROOD.

Enter MURRAY, MORTON, and RUTHVEN.

Morton. There is no present help: the violent speed
Of these fierce days has run our chances down.

It is found certain she comes back to-day;

Soon as their flight drew bridle at Dunbar,

Yet hot from horse, she sends for Bothwell in,

With all his border thievery, red-foot knaves,

The hardest hinds of Liddesdale; next him

His new bride's brother, Huntley, more in care

To win the land back than revenge the blood

His father lost for treason; after these Caithness with Athol, and the queen's chief strengths,

The earl marshal and the archbishop; in few days

Eight thousand swords to wait on that sweet hand

Was worth so little manhood; then Argyle,

Who should have been a sea-wall on our side

Against the foam of all their faction, he,

Struck to the heart with spite and sharp despair

Through proof late made of English faith,—as you,

My lord of Murray, felt it when ye twain

Sought help, and found false heart there,—casts himself

Over upon her side; with him two more Her last year's rebels, Rothes and Glencairn,

And pardon sealed for all that rose with
 them
 Who were not of our counsel in this
 death.
 Thus fare we without help or hope of
 these,
 And from the castle here of Edinburgh
 The hot Lord Erskine arms in our
 offence
 His mounted guns, making the queen
 more strong
 Than had her flight won first its dark-
 ling walls,
 And for a free camp in the general
 field
 Set up her strength within the fortress
 here —
 Which serves her now for outwork,
 while behind
 The whole force raised comes trooping
 to her hand.
 In this deep strait that our own hands
 have dug
 And our own follies channelled, to let
 in
 Storm on our sails and shipwreck on
 our hopes,
 My counsel is that whoso may stand
 fast
 Should here in harbor bide his better
 day,
 And we make land who may not : you,
 my lord,
 As by James Melville she solicits you,
 May honorably assure your peace with
 her,
 Being speckless in her sight of this
 man's blood;
 We that dipped open hand in it must
 hence,
 And watch the way of the wind and set
 of storm
 Till the sea sink again.
Ruthven. Sir, so say I;
 You serve not us a whit nor change our
 chance
 By tarrying on our side. Let no man
 fly
 For our deed's sake, but we that made
 our deed
 The witness for us not to be gainsaid
 By foe of ours or friend we have on
 earth.

It was well done ; what else was done,
 and ill,
 We must now bear the stroke of, and
 devise
 Some healing mean in season. This is
 sure,
 That faith or friendship shall have no
 long life
 Where friendship is ingrafted on breach
 of faith ;
 But shame, despite, division, and dis-
 trust
 Shall eat the heart out of their amity,
 And hate unreconcile their heartless
 hands
 Whom envious hope made fast, or cun-
 ning fear.
 This cannot be but nigh ; and ye that
 live
 Shall see more sure for this blind hour's
 default,
 And hold more fast, and watch more
 heedfully,
 The new chance given, for this chance
 cast away.
 I shall not see it, how near soe'er ; and
 yet
 The day that I shall die in banishment
 Is not much nigher than must their
 doom's day be
 Whose trust is in the triumph of their
 hour.
 Mine is now hard on end ; but yours
 shall last,
 I doubt not, till its service be all done,
 And comfort given our people. Take
 the Lairds
 Grange and Pittarrow with you to the
 queen.
 Ye shall find peace and opportunity
 With present welcome as for proffered
 love ;
 Make swift agreement with her ; this
 shall be
 The surest staff that hope may take in
 hand.
 Farewell.
Murray. I would not say it, if ye
 not knew
 My faith departs not with me from
 your side,
 Nor leaves the heart's bond broken of
 our loves ;

But in this trust, though loath, I take
farewell,
To give you welcome ere the year be
dead.

Ruthven. Me shall you not, nor see
my face again,
Who ere the year die must be dead;
mine eyes
Shall see the land no more that gave
them light,
But fade among strange faces; yet, if
aught
I have served her, I should less be loath
to leave
This earth God made my mother.

Murray. Then farewell,
As should his heart who fares in such
wise forth
To take death's hand in exile. I must
fare,
Ill now or well I know not; but I deem
I have as much as you of banishment,
Who bear about me but the thought of
yours.

SCENE IV.— HOLYROOD.

The QUEEN and SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Queen. Am I come back to be con-
trolled again,
And of men meaner? must I hold my
peace
Or set my face to please him? Nay,
you see
How much miscounselled is he, strayed
how far
From all men's hope and honor, and to
me
How strange and thankless, whom in
self-despite
You will me yet to foster: I would live
Rather the thrall of any hind on earth.

Melville. I would but have your wis-
dom hide somewhere
The sharpness of your spirit, whose
edge of wrath
There is no man but now sees mani-
fest;
As there is none who knows him that
hath cause
To love or honor; yet great pity it is
To see what nobler natural mind he
had,

And the first goodness in him so put
out

By cursed counsel of his mother's kin,
The bastard Douglas, and such ill
friends else

As most are unfriends: but this fire in
you

Who chose him, being so young, of
your own will,

Against the mind of many, for your
lord,

Shall rather burn yourself than purge
his mood,

And the open passion of your heart and
hate

Hearten in him the hate he bears not
you,

But them that part you from him.
Twice, you know,—

Or now my tongue were less for love's
sake bold,—

Twice hath it pleased your highness
charge me speak

When time or need might seem for
counsel: then

That thus you charged me, now such
need is come,

Forgive that I forget not.

Queen. I might well,
Did you forget, forgive not; but I know
Your love forgot yet never any charge
That faith to me laid on it; though I
think

I never bade you counsel me to bear
More than a queen might worthily, nor
sought

To be advised against all natural will,
That with mine honor now is joined to
speak

And bid me bear no more with him,
since both

Take part against my patience. For
his hate,

Henceforth shall men more covet it
than fear;

My foot is on its head, that even to-
day

Shall yield its last poor power of poison
up,

And live to no man's danger till it die.

Enter DARNLEY and MURRAY.
Welcome, dear brother and my worthy
lord,

Who shall this day by your own word
be clear

In all men's eyes that had ill thoughts
of you.

Brother, to-day my lord shall purge
himself,

By present oath before our councillors,
Of any part in David's murdered blood,
And stand as honorable in sight of all
Whose thought so wronged him as in
mine he doth

Who ever held him such as they shall
now

Murray. Must he swear this?

Darnley. Who says I shall not swear?

Queen. He has given his faith to
swear so much to-day,

And who so shameless or so bold alive
As dare doubt that?

Murray. Not I: in God's name, no;
No more than any other.

Darnley. Nay then, well:
I am not angry.

Queen. 'Tis the noblest mood
That takes least hold on anger those
faint hearts

That hold least fire are fain to show it
first;

The man that knows himself most hon-
orable

Fears least or doubts if others hold
him so;

But he that has small honor in himself
Is quick to doubt what men may deem
of him,

And thence most swift in anger as in
fear

Of men's imagined judgments; praised
be God,

Our lord is none such. Is the deed not
drawn

That gives into our servant Bothwell's
hand

The forfeit lands of Maitland for his
own

That by his former fault stand for-
feited?

Murray. Is it your purpose he shall
have those lands?

Queen. It is my very purpose.

Murray. I grieve at it.

Queen. Grieve or be glad, it stands
my purpose yet.

We should be gone to meet our coun-
cillors;

My heart thinks long till it shall know
my lord

Held of the world as noble as of me.

Darnley. It is not time.

Queen. No, but much more than time
Come with me, brother

[*Exeunt* *QUEEN* and *MURRAY*]

Melville. I am sorry for your grace.

Darnley. You must not think I know
not all this while

That she doth mock me.

Melville. Nay, her mood may change

Darnley. Never for me. I had been
much better dead

Than cast off thus, who cast mine own
friends off

And knew not for whose sake. She
hath slain the men

Who kept that night the gates while he
was slain;

I would she had rather taken too my
blood

Than put my life to shame: yet I may
live

To put that off upon her; had I friends.
Shame should go back from me to her,
who thinks

To lay it on her wedded lord, and
laugh;

As I may one day laugh yet. Hear
you news

Of Morton and mine uncle?

Melville. They are fled;

I hear but this, not whither.

Darnley. As they brewed,

So let them drink; the hands were
none of mine

That mixed that cup to them; so much
I swear,

And may so much with honor. Yet
would God

I had not chosen to lose their loves for
hers,

And found so cold her favor! Scarce
escaped,

Scarce out of bonds, half breathless
yet with flight,

No mind was in her of my help, my
love,

My hand that brake her prison: for all
this,

My kin forsaken, mine own wrongs
 and griefs
 Forgotten, mine own head imperilled,
 mine
 For hers that I delivered, and perchance
 To leave within their danger had done
 well,
 No thought or thanks I get of her; and
 these
 That, had I stood by them, might stand
 by me
 When I shall need, may mock me for
 her fool,
 And curse me for their traitor. Yet I
 think,
 Were I once clear of her as now of
 these,
 Please God, to make mine own strength
 by myself,
 Being both ways free; I know not well
 yet how,
 But I will take mine own part yet, or
 die. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V. — A STREET.

Enter TWO BURGESSES.

First Burgess. What is this news
 that flies so in the dark
 Like a night-bird whereof we know it
 is,
 But of what wing we know not?
Second Burgess. This that comes
 From the exiled lords in England, to
 make bare
 The face of Darnley's falsehood, with
 what lips
 He swore his deed away, and damned
 himself?
 They had no sooner knowledge of such
 shame,
 Than word was sent of him through all
 the land,
 Large witness of his full complicity
 And conscience with them of the work
 to be
 For which they groan in barren banish-
 ment,
 While he crawls here before the scorn-
 ful queen,
 And has betrayed the blood of his
 allies
 To the axe's edge of unjust judgment.

First Burgess. One
 By treason of his tongue already slain
 Now speaks of him with breathless
 mouth to God;
 And Maitland and two more lie under
 doom
 Through but his witness: yet for all
 this shame
 It seems he has won small guerdon
 save the shame,
 But hath his treason for his treason's fee;
 And this more comfort, to behold the
 man
 That by his lips, and nobler hands than
 his,
 Was done to righteous death, and
 thrust in earth
 Before the main door of this Abbey
 church,
 Uncarthed again, and nobly re-interred
 Hard by the grave's edge of Queen
 Magdalen,
 That men may judge how near he grew
 alive
 To the queen's side yet living; where
 instead
 A worthier stay now in her brother
 stands
 For her false lord to look upon and
 loathe
 No less than David, and much more
 to fear,
 Whom with that David he laid trains
 to slay
 Aforetime, and again made vaunt but
 now
 In the queen's sight to slay him; or so
 herself
 Gave word to the earl, and willed him
 make demand
 Of the king's own false fearful mouth;
 but he,
 Whom thus perchance she sought to
 make the sword
 To pierce her husband, modestly be-
 spake
 Before her face this caitiff like a friend,
 And was put off with faint excuse; and
 yet,
 Heart-wrung to see him stand, or any
 man,
 Fast in her favor, like one sick with
 grief

The king flies forth to Glasgow, where
 apart
 His father's head is hidden; and there
 as here
 He sits not in men's sight now royally,
 But with some six or eight goes up and
 down
 Even where he lists, and none takes
 note of him;
 While the miscounselled queen, grown
 high in mind,
 Holds privy commerce with the brood
 o' the Pope
 Whose plots corrupt the northward
 English air,
 And with the murderous Irish, to put
 out
 The live light of our God from sea
 to sea
 With insurrection of the fires of hell
 And smoke of slaughter; meantime she
 reclaims
 Of the English queen, for prisoners to
 her hand,
 The death-doomed lords in exile; and
 men say
 They find scant countenance of the
 southern court;
 Yet they think not she will deliver them.
Second Burgess. One is there hath
 found sure deliverance;
 No chain of man's can mark him pris-
 oner more,
 Nor whence he rests can any banish
 him;
 Ruthven is dead.
First Burgess. God hath his friend,
 then, safe;
 For God's friend he was ever; and hath
 died
 Most fortunately, seeing not what we
 live
 Too soon to see.
Second Burgess. He was a nobler man
 Than his own name was noble: no
 Scot born
 More true to the old love of his natural
 land,
 Nor stouter-hearted on the gospel side
 Of all that stood to serve it. Yet have
 these
 As valiant servants; Morton, though
 cast out,

Lives secret yet in England, whence the
 queen
 Dares not, I think, for shame's sake,
 yield him up
 To this queen's bloody judgment, or
 for fear
 And hostile heart she will not. We
 shall know
 Shortly what upshot God will bring of
 all;
 Whate'er this be, there will be none
 again
 That shall do Darnley good.
First Burgess. I saw him swear
 That day before the council; he was pale
 As one half drunken, stammering as in
 wrath,
 With insolent forehead and irresolute
 eyes,
 Between false fear and shameful hardi-
 hood,
 With frontless face that lied against it-
 self,
 And trembling lips that were not yet
 abashed
 For all their trembling.
Second Burgess. Ay, good cause was
 there
 To shake him to the soul, having cast
 off
 Friendship and faith of good men, yet
 being still
 Signed with their enemies' blood too
 plain and broad
 To gain the good-will of unrighteous-
 ness.
 When his day comes that men are
 weary of him,
 God shall strike home.
First Burgess. Then should that stroke
 be swift;
 For evil and good alike are weary of
 him.

SCENE VI.—CASTLE OF ALLOA.

MURRAY and DARNLEY.

Darnley. Shall I not see her? but if
 I see her not
 I will be wroken of you that shut me
 out,
 By God I will. What! are ye not com-
 bined,

You, my false-blooded brother, demi-prince,
 And Bothwell, and the trustless fool Argyle,
 With her to unmake me? I shall foil you though,
 Yea, were all three made each a triple man
 With thrice your heart and wit.
Murray. You strike too high,
 And shear but air in sunder: there's none yet
 That wills you so much evil as yourself,
 Would you but think it. Turn your wrath on me,
 It cannot wound or fright out of its peace
 A soul that answers not your hate, nor works
 By night or light against you.
Darnley. Swear me that,
 And if a devil there be, I am rid of you
 Whom he will gripe at once, and hale to hell.
 You took not word to Melville from my wife,
 Of warning with rebuke for his past pains
 To reconcile us, and with charge to be
 No more familiar with me for her sake;
 You were not of her counsel to lie in
 At Stirling, whence she fled from sight of me,
 Who following hither was again cast off,
 And till our child was born in Edinburgh
 Might scarce have sight of her, and may not now
 When, scarce a month delivered, she comes back
 To take by sea and land her pleasure here
 Of hunt or sail among the firths and hills
 In such fair fellowship as casts out mine.
 It was not you that knew this, and approved:
 I pray you, swear it.

Murray. You are lesser than a child,
 That, being as simple, yet by innocence

Exceeds you naturally. What cause have I
 Or power to wrong you? what good thing of yours
 Should I desire to strip from you, and wear,
 What gold or grace to gird myself withal,
 And stand up clad in thievish ornament
 To take your place thrust out? Conspiracy
 Should have some gain for warrant of itself,
 With vantage of some purpose; none lays wait
 To slay or steal save what may profit him;
 So sit you safe enough.
Darnley. I shall not see her?
Murray. If you will be well counselled, no: her mood
 Is hard and keener since your child was born,
 And she, new-risen from childbed, hither came
 To taste the savor and sweetness of the sea,
 I think, with no mind you should follow her;
 Nor am myself, howbeit you hold me hers,
 And of one counsel to put down your hopes,
 More near her favor; one man's eye alone
 Sees her face favorable, one only ear
 Hears her speak soft; if he be friend of mine,
 You know as I know.
Darnley. Why, ye are reconciled;
 I have heard what care she had to appease both parts,
 When you before her face had braved him, saying,
 Ere he reft Maitland's forfeit land and state
 Some score as honorable as he should die,
 And she had cast herself across your wrath
 With reconciling passion; ay, my lord,

Take note we are not so dull of ear or
brain
But we hear word of you, and under-
stand
The traitors that ye all are, all, to
me,
The false heart and the lying lips that
serve
The murderous meaning of your will,
and hers
The first and worst. What! will ye
have my life?
Is it my helpless blood that she would
take
To serve for christening-water to her
child,
And for the font no gift of English
gold
Though bright and hollow and void as
English love,
But the strait coffin, the vile shell of
death,
That hides and bears me graveward?
but I live,
To save myself and to revenge I live,
And will not die for all you.

Enter the QUEEN and BOTHWELL.

Queen. What is this
That makes such wrathful or such wo-
ful war
Even on our ears, and here? We bade
you not
Come brawl before us like a groom,
and break
Our breath of peace with cries of con-
tumely.
Here is not room enough for rioters'
threats
To ring through and return; in Edin-
burgh
You have leave to brawl and wail and
swear and cry,
Feed where you list, and love; here I
would rest,
With thus much leave yet by your
gracious grant,
That I may somewhere sit apart, and
think
What man I have to husband.
Darnley. I will go:
I would I had not come between your
eyes
Nor now nor ever.

Queen. Then they had never learnt
What makes or makes not man worth
looking on.

Darnley. Am I not worth your eye?

Queen. I pray, go back:
I would not say what you are worth or
no.

Darnley. I am yet worth two bas-
tards; and this man,
If he shall do me less than right, by
heaven,

Shall wear the proof upon him.

Murray. Sir, your words
Are as swords drawn of drunkards'
hands, which first

Feel their edge bite; me can they make
not shrink,

You they may pierce, and slay your
own good name,

If any man be that gives ear to you.

Darnley. You will not fight with me?

Queen. What! in our face?

Hath fear gone after shame?

Murray. Let him pass hence:

He hath said truth once; we shall not
fight.

Queen. I charge you
Make straight atonement; else, though
shame be dead,

I will find means to raise up fear alive.

Darnley. Nay, I spake hot and
hastily: my lord,

You know I bear no bitter heart toward
you:

I am more of quick tongue than of evil
will.

Murray. Sir, so I hold you.

Darnley. So you do but right.

Nor will I stay to chafe your majesty,
That has all power to bid me to and
fro

Who yet was called your lord once of
the priest,

And am no lord, but servant. [*Exit.*

Queen. Said you, once?

Not once, but twice, he hath spoken
truth to-day.

Yet sits it strange upon his lips.

Murray. I would

He had come not hither, or you not
bidden him back.

Queen. What! should he stay? Fair
brother, wot you well,

I had rather touch in the dark a serpent's flesh,
 And with its body and breath confound mine own,
 Than with his breath and body. Never more,
 By Mary Virgin, while these limbs are mine
 And these my living lips, never will I
 Pollute myself with him; by kiss nor touch
 Shall ever he defile me. Nay, too, see,
 (You have not seen) what privacies he hath
 With what strange friends; here have I to my hand
 Letters of his to Philip and the Pope,
 That they should know I am slacker toward the faith
 Than Rome would have me, or Spain; he swears I am cold,
 I have cast off care (God wot) to serve the Church,
 And he it is, my lord, being strong in faith,
 Expounds mine unfaith to them.

Bothwell. Hath he sworn
 To sleep for their sakes in a naked grave?
 If this were blown among the popular folk,
 Scant time there were to sew his shroud, I ween,
 Ere earth were shed upon him.

Murray. Ay, but, sir,
 They must not know it; it were not well they knew;
 Nor shall it be put forth among them.

Bothwell. No!
 It shall not?

Murray. By my will it shall not be.
Bothwell. His will! and shall not! Is it queen, or king,
 That holds the rod of rule in Scotland here?

Madam, what says your sometime majesty
 Of such a kingly will? since, for your own,
 It has no power, it shall not fight with his,
 Shall not have way, nor shall not be at all,
 Except it swim with his will.

Murray. This is naught.

Bothwell. Yea truly, naught shall be this will of yours, —
 This potent will that shall not tread us down;
 Yea, what you will or will not, all is naught,
 Naught as your name, or title to bear rule
 Within the realm possessed more royally.

Murray. 'Tis not a score as big-voiced men as this
 Shall make me weak with wagging of their tongues,
 That I should loose what lies into my hand.
 Madam, what faith I bear you and goodwill,
 If that you know not, let the time and proof,
 Not mine own lips, be witness: in this realm
 I have some power to serve you, by no craft
 Unjustly purchased nor by force of hand
 Won masterfully; and for God's love and yours

That which I may I will do to keep fair
 In the open eye of all men your good name
 And power, which if that name be blown against
 With windy whispers of ill-minded folk,
 Or such as see your marriage-bed lie cold,
 And know not wherefore, dies out of your hand,
 And is no more forever. Therefore is it

I would not the worst cause of strife you have
 Were opened to the people: for himself,
 You know if ever love between us were
 Since first I fell under your stroke of wrath
 For his sole sake, whose match then made with you
 I would betimes have broken, but being made
 Would not now see rent shamefully in twain
 That men should speak you wrong.

Queen. You are honorable;
 But yet the whole worst cause you know
 not of, —
 That even his father Lennox writes me
 here
 Letters to put the charge thereof away,
 And clear himself of fellowship there-
 in,
 Assuring his own honesty, albeit
 His word is worthless with his son my
 lord,
 And his name held not as a father's
 name.
 This letter will I lay before the lords,
 That they may see what manner of
 cause he hath
 To plead against us with what likeli-
 hood,
 When his own father shall forswear
 his cause.
 I am assured he hath set his lewd light
 mind, —
 Out of what fear I know not, or what
 shame, —
 To flee forth of the kingdom, and take
 ship
 For the islands westward of that south-
 ern cape
 Where the out-thrust heel of England
 cleaves the sea;
 But God knows how to live there, if by
 spoil
 Or what base mean of life: only thus
 much
 In parley with the French ambassador
 He hath avowed, and wept to tell of
 wrongs
 That, as he swears, have driven him
 down to this.

Murray. He is a fool, and vile: yet
 let not him
 Be the more dangerous to you even for
 this,
 That he is vile and foolish; there
 should be
 Wise means to curb and chain the fool
 in him
 Without the scandal of the full-mouthed
 world.

Queen. Such have I sought; and pres-
 ently I think
 To have him brought again in Edin-
 burgh

Before the lords in council, even those
 men
 Who stood in arms against him with
 yourself
 When first there grew debate upon our
 match
 (Which I could pray now with too tardy
 tongue
 That God had given you force to break
 indeed),
 And were of counsel with him afterward
 In David's bloodshed, and betrayed of
 him
 Into mine hand again for perfect fear,
 Fear and false heart; even before these,
 I say,
 Whose threefold memory of him so
 must knit
 Their hearts to his, there shall he plead,
 and say
 If he have aught against me blame-
 worthy,
 Or what he would: so shall he be dis-
 played,
 And we in the eyes of all men justified
 That simply deal with him and honor-
 ably,
 Not as by cunning or imperious hand,
 But plain as with an equal.

Bothwell. By my head,
 Your counsel, madam, is more than
 man's poor wit.

Murray. It may do well: would all
 were well indeed!

I see no clearer way than this of yours
 Nor of more peaceful promise. I will
 go
 To bid my friends together of the lords
 Who will be counselled of me, and to
 show
 Your purpose righteous: so I take my
 leave.

[Exit

Queen. Is not that light red oversea?
Bothwell. Blood-red.

Queen. The wind has fallen: but
 there the clouds come up.

We shall not sail to-day.

Bothwell. No: here will be
 No woman's weather.

Queen. Yet I had in mind
 Either to sail or drive the deer to-day.
 I fear not so much rainfall or sea-drift

That I should care to house and hide
my head.

I never loved the windless weather, nor
The dead face of the water in the sun:
I had rather the live wave leapt under me,
And fits of foam struck light on the
dark air,

And the sea's kiss were keen upon my
lip

And bold as love's and bitter; then my
soul

Is a wave too that springs against the
light,

And beats and bursts with one great
strain of joy

As the sea breaking. You said well;
this light

Is like shed blood spilt here by drops
and there,

That overflows the red brims of the
cloud,

And stains the moving water: yet the
waves

Pass, and the spilt light of the broken
sun

Rests not upon them but a minute's
space;

No longer should a deed, methinks,
once done,

Endure upon the life of memory
To stain the days thereafter with re-
morse,

And mar the better seasons.

Bothwell. So think I.

Queen. If I were man, I would be
man like you.

Bothwell. What then?

Queen. And, being so loved as you of
me,

I would make use of love, and in good
time

Put the scythe to it, and reap; it should
not rot

As corn ungarnered, it should bring
forth bread

And fruit of life to strengthen me: but,
mark,

Who would eat bread must earn bread:
would you be king?

Bothwell. Nay, but servant ever to
my queen.

Queen. Let us go forth; the evening
will be fair.

SCENE VII.—EDINBURGH: THE PARLIAMENT-HOUSE.

*The QUEEN seated in state; near her
DU CROC and MURRAY; DARNLEY
in front, as at his arraignment; on
the one side the Lords of the Congrega-
tion; on the other those of the Queen's
party, BOTHWELL, HUNTLEY, CAITH-
NESS, ATHOL, and the ARCHBISHOP
of ST. ANDREW'S.*

Queen. My lords, ye hear by his own
word of hand

How fair and loyally our father writes,
To purge his name that had indeed no

soil
Of any blame to us-ward; though he

have
No power upon our wedded lord his

son
To heal his heart's disease of discon-
tent:

Which, for myself, before God's face
and yours

I do protest I know not what thing
done

Hath in my lord begotten or brought
forth,

Nor of what ill he should complain in
me.

Nay, here in very faith and humble-
ness

I turn me to him, and with clasped
hands beseech

That he would speak even all his mind
of me,

In what thing ever I have given my
lord offence,

And if before him I stand blameworthy
Would lay my blame for burden on my

head
In this high presence; which to bear

shall be
At once for penance and instruction to

me,
Who know not yet my lightest fault by

name.
Ochiltree. So would we all be certi-
fied of you,

Sir, that your cause may stand forth
visibly,

And men take cognizance of it who
see

Nor root nor fruit now of your discontent;

We pray you, then, make answer to the queen.

Du Croc. My lord, you have held me for a friend, and laid

A friend's trust on me; for that honor's sake

For which I am bounden to you, give me now

But leave to entreat you in all faith of heart

Dishonor not yourself nor this great queen

By speech or silence with a show of shame;

Let it be seen shame hath no portion here,

But honor only and reconciled remorse That pours its bitter balm into the wound

Of love somewhile divided from itself, And makes it whole: I pray you, be it so now.

Queen. An honorable petition, my good lord,

And one that comes reverberate from my heart.

Darnley. I will not stand the question. Are ye set

To bait me like a bonds slave? Sirs, I think

There is no worthier man of you than I, Whom ye would chide and bait and mock: howbeit,

Ye shall not wring out of my smitten lips,

As from a child's ye scourge till he speak truth,

One word I would not; rather being thus used

I will go forth the free man that I came, No nobler, but as noble. For your grace,

I have stood too near you now to fall behind,

And stand far back with vassal hat plucked off

To bow at bidding; therefore with free soul

For a long time I take farewell and go, Commending you to God; and if, as seems,

I was or naught or grievous in your eye,

It shall not take offence this many a day

At this that here offends it. So I have done:

Enough said is said well.

Bothwell (aside to the Queen). I never saw

Such heart yet in the fool. Madam, speak now;

I wot he hath made a beard or two of them

Nod favorably.

Queen. What should I say? not I.

Bothwell. Speak to the ambassador; bid him take heed

This feather fly not shipward, and be blown

Out of our hand; speak to him.

Queen. Have no such fear.

He will not fly past arm's length; the French lord

Will hold him safe unbidden. Look, they talk.

Bothwell. And yet I would he had spoken not so high.

I did not think but he would bend, and mourn

Like a boy beaten.

Queen. With what sorrow of heart,

My lords, we have heard such strange and harsh reply

To our good words and meaning, none of you

But must be as ourself to know it well

But since nor kindness nor humble

speech

Nor honest heart of love can so prevail Against the soul of such inveteracy,

But wilful mind will make itself more hard

Than modesty and womanhood are soft Or gentleness can speak it fair, we have

not One other tear to weep thereon for shame.

So without answer, yea, no word vouchsafed,

As all ye witness, no complaint, no cause,

No reason shown, but all put off in wrath, —

I would not say, ourself in you, my
 lords,
 Mocked with defiance,—it were but a
 scorn
 To hold our session further. Thus in
 grief
 Will we fare hence, and take of you
 farewell,
 Being southward bounden, as ye know,
 to hear
 At Jedburgh what complaint of wrong
 there is
 Between our own folk and the border-
 ing men,
 Whose wardens of the English side
 have wrought us
 Fresh wrong but late; and our good
 warden here
 Shall go before us to prepare our way.

SCENE VIII.—HERMITAGE CASTLE.

The QUEEN and BOTHWELL.

Bothwell. I did not think you could
 have rid so fast.

Queen. There is no love in you to lift
 your heart,
 Nor heart to lift the fleshly weight, and
 bear
 Forward: I struck my love even as a
 spur
 Into the tired side of my horse, and
 made it
 Leap like a flame that eats up all its way
 Till I were here.

Bothwell. Why came you not before?

Queen. What I am I now too slow?

Bothwell. Ay, though you rode
 Beyond the sun's speed, yea, the race
 of time
 That runs down all men born. Forgive
 it me
 That I was wroth and weary for your
 love,
 Here lying alone, out of your eyes; I
 could not
 But chafe and curse, sending my spirit
 forth
 From this maimed flesh yet halting with
 its wound
 To move about you like a thought, and
 bring me
 Word of your works and ways.

Queen. I could not come.

Bothwell. Was there so much work
 worthier to be done

Than this, to give love and to take
 again

Thus? but for my part, of all things in
 the world

I hold this best, to love you; and I
 think

God never made your like for man to
 love.

Queen. You are my soldier; but
 these silk-soft words

Become your lips as well as mine, when
 love

Rekindles them; how good it is to have
 A man to love you! here is man in-
 deed,

Not fool or boy, to make love's face
 ashamed,

To abash love's heart, and turn to bit-
 terness

The sweet blood-current in it. O my
 fair lord!

How fairer is this warrior face, and
 eyes

With the iron light of battle in them
 left

As the after-fire of sunset left in heaven
 When the sun sinks, than any fool's
 face made

Of smiles and courtly color! Now I
 feel

As I were man too, and had part myself
 In your great strength; being one with
 you as I,

How should not I be strong? It is
 your deed,

By grace of you and influence, sir, it is
 That I fear nothing; how should I lift
 up

Mine eyes to your eyes, O my light o'
 the war,

And dare be fearful? yours but looked
 upon,

Though mine were timorous as a dove's
 affrayed,

For very shame would give them heart,
 and fire

To meet the eyes of danger. What
 were I

To have your love, and love you, and
 yet be

No more than women are whose name
 is fear
 And their hearts bloodless, — I, who
 am part of you,
 That have your love for heart's blood?
 Shall I think
 The blood you gave me fighting for
 my sake
 Has entered in my veins, and grown in
 me
 To fill me with you? O my lord, my
 king,
 Love me! I think you cannot love me
 yet,
 That have done naught nor borne for
 love of you;
 But by the eye's light of all-judging
 God,
 That if I lie shall burn my soul in hell,
 There is not in this fierce world any
 thing,
 Scorn, agony, stripes, bonds, fears, woes,
 deep shame,
 Kingdomless ruin, but with open hands,
 With joyous bosom open as to love,
 Yea, with soul thankful for its great
 delight
 And life on fire with joy, for this love's
 sake
 I would embrace and take it to my
 heart.

Bothwell. Why, there should need
 not this to love you well;
 What should you have to bear for me,
 my queen,
 Or how should I more love you? Nay,
 sweet, peace,
 Let not your passion break you; your
 breast burns,
 Your very lips taste bitter with your
 tears.

Queen. It is because — O God that
 pities us! —
 I may not always lie thus, may not
 kneel,
 Cling round your hands and feet, or
 with shut eyes
 Wait till your lips be fast upon my face,
 And laugh with very love intolerable
 As I laugh now. Look, now I do not
 weep,
 I am not sad nor angered against heaven
 That ever he divides us; I am glad

That yet I have mine hour. Sweet, do
 not speak,
 Nor do not kiss me; let mine eyes but
 rest
 In the love's light of yours, and for a
 space
 My heart lie still, late drunken with
 love's wine,
 And feel the fierce fumes lessen and go
 out
 And leave it healed. Oh! I have bled
 for you
 The nearest inward blood that is my
 life
 Drop by drop inly, till my swooning
 heart
 Made my face pale. I should look
 green and wan
 If by heart's sickness and blood-wast-
 ing pain
 The face be changed indeed; for all
 these days
 Your wound bled in me, and your face
 far off
 Was as a moving fire before mine
 eyes
 That might not come to see you; I was
 dead,
 And yet had breath enough, speech,
 hearing, sight,
 To feel them strange and insupport-
 able.
 I know now how men live without a
 heart.

Does your wound pain you?

Bothwell. What! I have a wound?

Queen. How should one love enough,
 though she gave all,
 Who had your like to love? I pray
 you tell me,
 How did you fight?

Bothwell. Why, what were this to
 tell?

I caught this reiver, by some chance of
 God,
 That put his death into mine hand,
 alone,
 And charged him; foot to foot we
 fought some space,
 And he fought well; a gallant knave,
 God wot,
 And worth a sword for better soldier's
 work

Than these thieves' brawls. I would
have given him life
To ride among mine own men here and
serve,

But he would not : so being sore hurt i'
the thigh

I pushed upon him suddenly, and clove
His crown through to the chin.

Queen. I will not have you
Henceforth for warden of these borders,
sir ;

We have hands enow for that and heads
to cleave

That but their wives will weep for.

Bothwell. Have no fear.
This hour had healed me of more
grievous wounds :

When it shall please you sign me to
your side,

Think I am with you.

Queen. I must ride — woe's me !
The hour is out. Be not long from
me, love ;

And till you come, I swear by your own
head

I will not see the thing that was my
lord,

Though he came in to Jedburgh. I had
thought

To have spoken of him, but my lips
were loath

To mar with harsh intrusion of his
name

The least of all our kisses. Let him
be :

We shall have time. How fair this
castle stands !

These hills are greener, and that sing-
ing stream

Sings sweeter, and the fields are bright-
er faced,

Than I have seen or heard ; and these
good walls

That keep the line of kingdom, all my
life

I shall have mind of them to love them
well.

Nay, yet I must to horse.

Bothwell. Ay must you, sweet ;
If you will ride thus fifty mile a day,
But for your face you should be man
indeed.

Queen. But for my face ?

Bothwell. If you will make me mad —
Queen. I dare not dwell with mad-
men ; sir, farewell.

Bothwell. But for your love, and for
its cruelty,

I would have said, you should be man.

Queen. Alas !

But for my love ? nay, now you speak
but truth ;

For I well knew there was no love in
man.

But we grow idle in this our laboring
time.

When we have wrought through all
the heat o' the day,

We may play then unblamed, and fear
no hand

To push us each from other : now fare
well.

SCENE IX. — THE QUEEN'S LODGING AT JEDBURGH.

The three MARIES.

Mary Carmichael. What, will she
die ? how says this doctor now ?

Mary Seyton. He thinks by chafing
of her bloodless limbs

To quicken the numbed life to sense
again

That is as death now in her veins ; but
surely

I think the very spirit and sustenance
That keeps the life up current in the
blood

Hath left her as an empty house, for
death,

Entering, to take and hold it.

Mary Beaton. I say, no ;
She will not die of chance or weariness.
This fever caught of riding and hot
haste

Being once burnt out, as else naught
ails her, will not

Leave her strength tainted : she is
manly made,

And good of heart ; and even by this
her brain,

We see, begins to settle ; she will live.

Mary Carmichael. Pray God she
may, and no time worse than this
Come through her death on us and all
her land

Left lordless for men's swords to carve
and share, —
Pray God she die not.

Mary Beaton. From my heart, amen!
God knows and you if I would have her
die.

Mary Seyton. Would you give up
your loving life for hers?

Mary Beaton. I shall not die before
her; nor, I think,
Live long when she shall live not.

Mary Seyton. A strange faith:
Who put this confidence in you? or is it
But love that so assures you to keep
life

While she shall keep, and lose when
she shall lose

For very love's sake?

Mary Beaton. This I cannot tell,
Whence I do know it; but that I know
it I know,

And by no casual or conjectural proof
Not yet by test of reason; but I know it
Even as I know I breathe, see, hear,
feed, speak,

And am not dead and senseless of the
sun

That yet I look on: so assuredly
I know I shall not die till she be dead.
Look, she is risen.

*Enter the QUEEN, supported by attend-
ants.*

Queen. What word was in your lips?
That I must die?

Mary Seyton. Heaven hath not such
hard heart.

Queen. I think I shall not, surely, by
God's grace;

Yet no man knows of God when he will
bring

His hour upon him. I am sick and
weak,

And yet unsure if I be whole of mind.
I think I have been estranged from my
right wits

These some days back; I know not.
Prithee tell me,

Have I not slept? I know you, who
you are;

You were about me thus in our first
days,

When days and nights were rose-leaves
that fell off

Without a wind or taint of chafing air,
But passed with perfume from us, and
their death

Had on it still the tender dew of birth.
We were so near the sweet warm wells
of life,

We lay and laughed in bosom of the
dawn,

And knew not if the noon had heat to
burn

Or the evening rain to smite us; being
grown tall,

Our heads were raised more near the
fires of heaven

And bitter strength of storms; then we
were glad,

Ay, glad and good. Is there yet one of
you

Keeps in her mind what hovers now in
mine, —

That sweet strait span of islanded green
ground

Where we played once, and set us
flowers that died

Before even our delight in them was
dead?

Now we are old, delights are first to die
Before the things that breed them.

Mary Seyton (aside). She roams yet.

Mary Beaton. I do remember.

Queen. Yea, I knew it; one day
We wrangled for a rose' sake, and fell
out

With tears and words protesting each
'twas she,

She 'twas that set it; and for very wrath
I plucked up my French lilies, and set
foot

On their gold heads, because you had
chafed me, saying

Those were her flowers who should be
queen in France,

And leave you, being no queen, your
Scottish rose

With simpler leaves ungilt and inno-
cent

That smelt of homelier air; and I mine
well

I rent the rose out of your hand, and
cast

Upon the river's running; and a thorn
Pierced through mine own hand, and
wept not then,

But laughed for anger at you, and glad heart

To have made you weep, being worsted. What light things

Come back to the light brain that sickness shakes,

And makes the heaviest thought that it can hold

No heavier than a leaf, or gossamer That seems to link two leaves a minute, then

A breath unlinks them; so my thoughts are, — nay,

And should not so: it may be I shall die,

And as a fool I need not pass away With babbling lips unpurged and graceless heart

Unreconciled to mercy. Let me see That holy lord I bade be not far off

While I lay sick — I have not here his name.

My head is tired, yet have I strength at heart

To say one word shall make me friends with God,

Commending to him in the hour of unripe death

The spirit so rent untimely from its house,

And, ere the natural night lay hold on it,

Darkly divided from the light of life. Pray him come to me.

Mary Beaton. Is it my lord of Ross, The queen would see? my lord is at her hand.

Enter the BISHOP OF ROSS.

Queen. Most reverend father, my soul's friend, you see

How little queenlike I sit here at wait Till God lay hand on me for life or death,

With pain for that gold garland of my head

Men call a crown, and for my body's robe

Am girt with mortal sickness: I would fain,

Before I set my face to look on death, Mine eyes against his eyes, make

straight the way

My soul must travel with this flesh put off

At the dark door; I pray you for God's grace

Give me that holy help that is in you To lighten my last passage out of sight.

For this world's works, I have done with them this day,

With mine own lips while yet their breath was warm

Commending to my lords the natural charge

Of their born king, and by my brother's mouth

To the English queen the wardship of her heir,

And by the ambassador's of France again

To his good mistress and my brother king

The care of mine unmothered child, who has

No better friends bequeathable than these;

And for this land have I besought them all, —

Who may beseech of no man aught again, —

That here may no man for his faith be wronged

Whose faith is one with mine that all my life

I have kept, and fear not in it now to die.

Bishop of Ross. Madam, what comfort God hath given his priests

To give again, what stay of spirit and strength

May through their mean stablish the souls of men

To live or die unvexed of life or death, Unwounded of the fear and fang of hell,

Doubt not to have; seeing though no man be good,

But one is good, even God, yet in his eye

The man that keeps faith sealed upon his soul

Shall through the blood-shedding of Christ be clean.

And in this time of cursing and flawed faith

Have you kept faith unflawed, and on
your head
The immediate blessing of the spouse
of God.

Have no fear therefore but your sins
of life,
Or stains and shadows such as all men
take,

In this world's passage, from the touch
of time,
Shall fall from off you as a vesture
changed,

And leave your soul for whiteness as
a child's.

Queen. I would have absolution ere I
die,

But of what sins I have not strength to
say

Nor hardly to remember. I do think
I have done God some service, holding
fast

Faith, and his Church's fear; and have
loved well

His name and burden set on me to
serve,

To bear his part in the eye of this
thwart world,

And witness of his cross; yet know
myself

To be but as a servant without grace
Save of his lord's love's gift; I have
sinned in pride,

Perchance, to be his servant first, and
fight,

In face of all men's hate and might,
alone,

Here sitting single-sceptred, and com-
pel

For all its many-mouthed inveteracy
The world with bit and bridle like a
beast

Brought back to serve him, and bowed
down to me,

Whose hand should take and hale it by
the mane,

And bend its head to worship as I bade,
I, first among his faithful; so I said,

And foolishly; for I was high of heart;
And now, behold, I am in God's sight
and man's

Nothing; but though I have not so
much grace

To bind again this people fast to God,

I have held mine own faith fast, and
with my lips

Have borne him witness if my heart
were whole.

Bishop of Ross. Therefore shall he
forget not in your hour,

Nor for his child reject you; and shall
make

The weight and color of your sins on
earth

More white and light than wool may be
or snow.

Queen. Yea, so my trust is of him;
though as now

Scarce having in me breath or spirit of
speech

I make not long confession, and my
words

Through faintness of my flesh lack
form; yet, pray you,

Think it but sickness and my body's
fault

That comes between me and my will,
who fain

Would have your eye look on my naked
soul,

And read what writing there should be
washed out

With mine own heart's tears, and with
God's dear blood,

Who sees me for his penitent; for
surely

My sins of wrath and of light-minded-
ness,

And waste of wanton will and wander-
ing eyes,

Call on me with dumb tongues for
penitence;

Which I beseech you let not God reject
For lack of words that I lack strength
to say.

For here, as I repent and put from me,
In perfect hope of pardon, all ill

thoughts,

So I remit all faults against me done,
Forgive all evil toward me of all men,

Deed or device to hurt me; yea, I
would not

There were one heart unreconciled with
mine

When mine is cold; I will not take
death's hand

With any soil of hate or wrath or wrong

About me, but being friends with this
past world
Pass from it in the general peace of
love.

Mary Beaton. Here is some message
from the world of friends,
Brought to your brother: shall my lord
come in?

Queen. What lord? ye have no lord
of any man
While I am lady of all you. Who is
this?

Message? what message? whence?

Enter MURRAY.

Murray. From Edinburgh
Your husband new alighted in sharp
speed

Craves leave of access to your majesty.

Queen. By heaven, I had rather death
had leave than he.

What comes he for? to vex me quick
or dead

With his lewd eyes and sodden sidelong
face

That I may die again with loathing of
him?

By God, as God shall look upon my
soul,

I will not see him. Bid him away, and
keep

Far off as Edinburgh may hold him
hence

Among his fellows of the herded swine
That not for need but love he wallows
with

To expend his patrimony of breath and
blood

In the dear service of dishonoring
days.

Murray. Let him but bide the night
here.

Queen. Not an hour;
Not while his horse may breathe. I
will not see him.

Murray. Nay, for the world's sake,
and lest worse he said;

Let him sleep here, and come not in
your sight.

Queen. Unless by some mean I be
freed of him,

I have no pleasure upon earth to live.
I will put hand to it first myself. My

lord,

See how this ill man's coming shakes
my soul,

And stains its thoughts with passionate
earth again

That were as holy water, white and
sweet,

For my rechristening; I could weep
with wrath

To find between my very prayer and
God

His face thrust like a shameful thought
in sleep.

I cannot pray nor fix myself on heaven
But he must loose my hold, break up

my trust,

Unbind my settled senses, and pluck
down

My builded house of hope. Would he
were dead

That puts my soul out of its peace with
God!

Comfort me, father; let him not have
way;

Keep my soul for me safe, and full of
heaven

As it was late. — See that you rid him
hence,

I charge you, sir, with morning.

Murray. Yea, I shall;

'Twere best he saw you not.

Queen. I think so. Hark!

Who is there lighted after him? I
heard —

Nay, he is sick yet, wounded; yet I
heard —

Pray God he be not risen too soon,
to ride

With his wound's danger for r y sick-
ness' sake.

Mary Beaton. It is my lord the war-
den.

Queen. What! I knew it, —
So soon so far, and with such speed!

ay, never

Had queen so ill befriended of her own
So fast a friend and loving. I will see
him;

I am stronger than I was. Give me
your hands;

I can stand upright surely. Come you
in,

And help to attire me like a living
queen;

These are as grave-clothes. One go
 bring me word
 How he looks now,—if weak or well
 indeed,
 If stout of cheer or tired. Say, for his
 coming
 And care unbidden of me, I thank him
 not
 If he have done his own wound hurt
 thereby.
 I will but rest, and see him: bring me
 in. [Exeunt.]

SCENE X.—CRAIGMILLAR.

The QUEEN, MURRAY, BOTHWELL,
 MAITLAND, HUNTLEY, and ARGYLE.

Queen. If it must be, or all without
 it break,
 I am content to have Lord Morton
 home;
 Nay, all of them ye will, save two I
 keep
 To be the food of justice and my
 wrath,
 Now hunger-starven; his red hand who
 set
 To my child-burdened breast the iron
 death,
 And the uncle of my caitiff; they shall
 bleed,
 As Ruthven should, but for death's
 hastier hand
 That plucked him up before me: for
 his son,
 Let him come back too.

Maitland. It is nobly judged,
 And shall content the lords and land
 alike
 With such good counsel and such fair
 consent
 To see your highness moved to rid
 yourself
 Of their disease and yours, with all
 men's will
 Purged from you by the readiest mean
 we may.

Queen. Ay, by divorce: I have then
 your tongues to that,—
 Yours, both my friends now that were
 ill friends once,
 But handfast here in common faith to
 me

And equal-hearted; and my brother's
 voice,
 Joined with these good lords present:
 but you said,
 Was it not you said, sir, that by divorce,
 Though leave were given of them that
 might withhold,
 And the priest's word that bound un-
 bound us, yet
 Some soil might fall from lips of evil
 will

On our son's birth-name?

Maitland. Yea, from ill men's mouths
 And all that hate you such rebuke might
 fall,

Which were foul shame to suffer and
 be dumb,
 Though made by your divorce unan-
 swerable.

Queen. In sooth, I thought so; and
 howbeit yourself,
 My lord of Bothwell, by the judgment
 given

That loosed your mother's from your
 father's hand
 Stood undespoiled in fair inheritance,
 It may be where the cast is of a
 crown,
 And such a crown as in contention
 shakes

Two several-storied kingdoms, even the
 chance
 Should stand not questionable, and
 friend nor foe

Have word to throw against it.

Maitland. So I said.

Bothwell. Yet must the queen be
 freed; and for the fear
 Lest England for his sake be moved, I
 know not

What hold it has upon us, who but
 now

Saw what good heart and loyal will
 they bear

To the right heirship of your majesty
 Who bide on our south border, when
 their guns

From Berwick hailed you passing
 hither, and made

The loud-mouthed crags cry to their
 batteries back,

And tell the sundering Tweed and all
 green hills,

And all the clamorous concourse of the
 sea,
 The name that had the lordship of both
 lands
 In heritage to bind them fast in one.
 There heart and tongue outspake of
 the true north
 That for his caitiff sake should not be
 moved
 Nor alter from its faith though he were
 cast,
 With haltered throat or millstone round
 his neck,

From a queen's bed into the naked sea.

Maitland. Madam, we are here for
 service of your grace,
 Chief of your council and nobility:
 We shall find mean whereby without
 wrong done

To your son's title, you shall well be
 quit

Of your ill-minded husband; and albeit
 My lord of Murray present here be one
 As scrupulous of his faith a Protestant
 As is your grace a Papist, he will look
 As through his fingers on the work we
 do,

And say no word, I am well assured,
 of all

His eye may wink on.

Queen. Nay, I cannot tell;
 I would not have mine honor touched,
 nor buy

My peace with hurt of conscience;
 being so wise

As silence proves you or as speech
 proclaims,

Ye shall do well to let this be; perchance
 The good ye mean me being untimely
 done

Might turn to my displeasure, and your
 hands

Leave me more hurt than holpen.

Murray. You say well;
 For none but honorable and lawful ends
 Have I desired this council, to procure
 Your just and honest freedom, and re-
 peal

The banished Morton, whose advice
 thereto

Shall not be fruitless; for no further aim
 To no strange mean have I put hand.

Farewell.

[*Exit.*

Argyle. He will not know of us
 enough to thwart;

And so not least may serve us; but if
 here

These hands whose help would hurt
 you not be set

To such a bond as may put forth our
 cause,

And bind us to sustain it with one soul,
 Shall they more hurt than help you?

Queen. Nay, ye are wise;

I know not; but I think your helpful
 hands

Could not be set but to my service.

Huntley. Then

Should we set down what reason or
 resolve

We have to make it manifest and sure
 That this young fool and tyrant by our
 will

Shall bear no rule among us, and
 thereto

For divers causes shall he be put forth
 One way or other, and what man soe'er
 Shall take this deed in hand, or do it,
 all we

Shall as our own and general act of all
 Defend and fortify it.

Queen. Must all set hands
 To one same bond for warrant?

Bothwell. Who should fail?
 Not we that shall devise it, nor Balfour,
 My kinsman here and friend.

Queen. Must you sign too?

Bothwell. How must I not? am I not
 fit to serve

As being or coward or faithless or a
 fool,

Or all or any? or what misdoubt of
 yours

Should wash my writing out or blur my
 name?

What faith a faithful servant of his
 hands

May freely challenge of the king they
 serve,

So much I challenge of your majesty.

Queen. Nay, my fair lord, but for your
 known faith's sake

And constant service the less need it
 were

To have your hand here on our side
 lest men

Should lay the deed but on mine ancient
friends,
Whose names not all men love yet for
my sake,
And call it but our privy plot and hate,
Which is the judgment of all wisest
lords
And equal sentence of the general land.

Maitland. So we that were not count-
ed with your friends
Should bear the whole deed and its
danger up,—
We whom you have loved not, madam,
for the stand

We made against the perilous loves
and hates
That loosened half your people's love
from you.

Yet must we have his hand too.

Bothwell. Ay, and shall.
I wear no gloves when hands are bared
to strike.

Queen. Be it as you will; I am noth-
ing in your count;
So be it; my counsel shall not cumber
you.
Do all ye list.

Maitland. And all that shall be done
Will be the more strength to your
majesty,
And comfort to your cause: which now
we go

With all our help to hearten.

Queen. Go, and thrive.
[*Exeunt MAITLAND, HUNTLEY, and*
ARGYLE

I would we had no need of such men's
tongues.

Bothwell. He has the wisest name on
all their side;
And by the tether that holds fast his
faith
We lead their lesser wits what way we
will.

Sharp-spirited is he surely, deep of soul,
Cunning and fearless; one that gives,
men say,

Small heed or honor to their faiths or
fears
And breath of holy custom; undis-
traught

By doubt of God's hand paddling in our
clay

Or dream of God's eye slanted on our
sin;
As one that holds more worthily of
God,

—Or would not hold at all—whate'er
he be,
Than of a sidelong scrupulous overseer
That pries askance upon our piteous
lives

To judge of this and this, how ill or
well,
And mark souls white or black with
coal or chalk

For crowning or for burning, palms or
fires;

One therefore that through all shut
ways of life

Lets his soul range, even like the all-
winnowing wind,

And ply her craft in all life's businesses
Not like a blind man burdened; sure
of hand

And great of counsel, like an under fire
That works in the earth and makes its
breach by night,

And leaps a league's length at the first
stride forth

Of its free foot, blackening the face of
men;

So strong and keen and secret is his
soul.

Queen. So he keep trust, I care not
if his creed

Be faced or lined with craft and
atheism,

His soul be close or open; but what
bond

Shall bind him ours so sure that fraud
nor force

May serve against us more?

Bothwell. Doubt me not that;
By hilt, not edge, we hold him as a
sword

That in our hand shall bend not till we
break,

If we would break it when our work is
done.

Queen. Have we the strength? I
doubt not of this hand,

That holds my heart, if it be strong
or no,

More than I doubt of the eyes that
light mine eyes,

The lips that my lips breathe by, — O
 my life,
 More than I doubt of mine own bitter
 love,
 More than of death's no power to sun-
 der us,
 Of his no force to quench me who am
 fire, —
 Fire for your sake, that would put all
 these out
 To shine and lighten in your sight alone
 For warmth and comfort, being to all
 eyes beside
 Or fear or ruin more fleet of foot than
 fear.
 I would I had on breast or hand or
 brow
 In crown or clasp the whole gold
 wrought of the earth,
 In one keen jewel the store of all the
 sea,
 That I might throw down at your hand
 or foot
 Sea, land, and all that in them is of
 price,
 Or in the strong wine of my piercing
 love
 Melt the sole pearl of the earth, and
 drink dissolved
 The cost of all the world's worth.

Bothwell. Yea, my queen?

I have then no fear what man shall deem
 or do;
 For by this fire and light of you I
 swear, —
 That is my sunlight and my fire of
 day, —
 We shall not walk as they that walk by
 night
 Toward our great goal uncertainly, nor
 swerve
 Till we strike foot against it. Kiss me
 now,
 And bid me too speed on my way with
 them
 To bring back all their hands here to
 the bond
 Set fast as mine, or as your heart is fast
 Set on his death whose life lies nigh
 burnt out,
 Half brand, half ash already, in the heat
 Of that bright wrath which makes as
 red as flame

Your fearful and sweet splendor; nay,
 by heaven,
 It flushes all the light about your face
 With seven-times-kindled color of pure
 fire,
 And burns mine eyes beholding, as
 your lips
 And quick breath burn me kissing. My
 sweet fear,
 Had you not been the sweetest, even
 to me
 You must have been the fearfulest
 thing alive.

Queen. For love is so, and I am very
 love,

And no more queen or woman; have
 no heart,
 No head, no spirit or sense at all of life,
 Save as of love that lives and that is I,
 I that was woman, and bore rule alone
 Upon myself; who am all dis-king-
 domed now,
 Made twice a slave, — mine own soul's
 thrall, and yours
 Who wield the heart that wields me at
 your will.

I can but do as wills the spirit in me
 Which is your spirit's servant. Ah,
 my lord, —

My one lord every way, my poor heart's
 blood,

Breath of my lips and eyesight of mine
 eyes, —

How did I live the life that loved you
 not?

What were those days wherein I walked
 apart,

And went my way, and did my will
 alone,

And thought and wrought without you
 in the world?

Then I did evil and folly: the more
 need

I purge me now, and perfect my desire,
 Which is to be no more your lover, no,
 But even yourself, yea more than body
 and soul,

One and not twain, one utter life, one
 fire,

One will, one doom, one deed, one
 spirit, one God;

For we twain grown and molten each
 in each

Surely shall be as God is and no man.

Bothwell. God speed us, then, till we grow up to God!

Me first, who first shall clear our way to climb

By carving one weed's earthly coil away
That cumpers our straight growing:
pray for me!

I will have all their hands to it in an hour.

SCENE XI. — COURTYARD OF A HOST-ELRY AT WHITTINGHAM.

BOTHWELL and MORTON.

Morton. Fled in pure fear of me? well, he knows best.

Towards Glasgow, said you?

Bothwell. Soon as came the word
You were brought home with welcome
of the queen,

He spurs from Stirling with all heat of speed, —

Even from her arms new-reconciled and face

That favorably had received him;
leaves the feast

Half made, and his unchristened yearning there

Not yet signed God's, and dewy from the font

Long waited for, till the English golden gift

Was grown too strait to hold and hal- low him, —

Flies from all sight and cheer of festal folk,

And on the way being smitten sick with fear

Cries out of poison working in his flesh
Blue-spotted as with ulcerous pesti- lence,

Weeps himself dead, and wails himself alive,

As now he lies, but bedrid; and has lain

This Christmas through, while the queen held her feast

At Drummond Castle.

Morton. Yea, I heard so; and you At Tullibardine likewise, or men lie, Kept the feast high beside her. Well, my lord,

Now have you time and room to say for each

What ye would have of me, the queen and you,

Who are hand and tongue at once of her design.

Here am I newly lighted, hot from horse,

But fresh come forth of exile and ill days

To do you service: let me have her hand

For warrant of what dangerous work she will,

And mine is armed to do it; but till I have,

Expect of me, who have seen times strange as this,

Nothing.

Bothwell. I have her warrant in my lips;

By me she speaks you safe in serving her.

Morton. Let that secure yourself: I must have proofs.

Bothwell. You shall have all, and written; but your hand

Must be in this with ours.

Morton. I have cause enough,
Good reason and good will to see it performed,

But will not strike through mine own side at him:

Make your mind sure of that.

Bothwell. Well, you shall have it;
Myself will fetch your warrant from her hand

That from my mouth assures you not; and then —

Morton. Then shall my hand make answer to her own. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XII. — CALLANDER.

The QUEEN and LADY RERES.

Queen. I do not feel as at past partings: then

My heart was sick and bitter, and mine eye

Saw not beyond the grievous hour at hand;

Now when of all time I should be most sad,

Being parted at love's highest of height
 from love,
 And bound to meet love's poison and
 my plague,
 My life's live curse yet married to my
 life,
 Yet am I light and fuller of sweet hope
 Than even sweet memory fills me.

Lady Reres. It is well
 When dawn discomforts not the whole
 sweet night.

Queen. There be stars sure that die
 not of the day,
 Or in this hoariest hour of dusk and dew
 How should my heart be warm with
 last night's fire?

Enter BOTHWELL.

What! risen so soon, my lord?

Bothwell. What! not yet forth?
 That was the question laughing on your
 lips,
 And this my plea to kill the question
 with. [*Kissing her.*

I must ride now. There waits a mes-
 senger
 From our wed lord in Glasgow.

Queen. Ay? would God
 He had slipt his saddle and borne his
 charge to hell!

Must we part here? I ask but what I
 know,

Only to have a breath more of your
 mouth,

A smile more of your eye, turn of your
 head,

Before you kiss and leave me. Why
 should love,

That can change life, seat and disseat
 the soul

In heaven or hurl it hellward, break and
 build,

Root and unroot the very springs o'
 the heart,

Have not the force to pluck but twelve
 hours back,

And twice consume and twice consum-
 mate life,

Twice crowned and twice confounded?
 I would give

All but love's self, all hope and heat of
 life,

But to have over this scant space again,
 Since yesterday saw sunset.

Bothwell. You shall win
 A better prayer than this; for one poor
 hour

Caught from the gripe of all good-
 grudging time,

An hundred-fold in long-lived happi-
 ness,

Secure and scatheless of all change or
 fear.

Queen. Yet this joy waited on by fear
 and doubt,

Plucked casually, a flower of accident,
 On the rough lip and edge of danger's
 breach,

How sweeter is it than the rose to
 smell

We gather from our garden with gloved
 hand,

And find nor thorn nor perfume! You
 must go,

And I part hence; yet all through life
 and death

I shall have mind of this most gracious
 place,

Poor palace of all pleasure, where I
 found

Brief harborage in long travel of my
 life.

Now take farewell of me.

Bothwell. Fair lips, farewell,
 And love me till we kiss again and
 sleep. [*Exit.*

Queen. So may my last sleep kiss me
 at your lips,

And find me full of you as heaven of
 light

When my time comes of slumber. —
 Bid this man

Come in that waits: he shall bear word
 of me

Before I stand in his lord's sight again.

Enter CRAWFORD.
 What message from our lord your
 master, sir?

Crawford. Madam, with all his heart
 my lord commends

His heart's excuses to your majesty
 For the great grief and doubt wherein
 it stands

Of your unstanched displeasure; of
 which fear

He lies soul-sick, and sends that heart
 by me

To crave its pardon of you, and for
 grace
 From your dread lips some comfortable
 word
 That may assure him who now lives in
 pain
 Through the evil news he hears from
 all winds blown,
 In all mouths open; whence as one
 distraught,
 And knowing not how to bear himself
 secure
 Or dare put forth to meet you, for the
 words
 He hears you have said, though fain, I
 know, to come
 And clear himself of aught that you
 suspect
 By present inquisition, — this I know,
 Though now he laid no charge on me
 to say, —
 He hath writ you word already of his
 grief,
 And finds no answer but of bitter sound,
 Nor any light of pity from your face,
 Nor breath of healing; wherefore on
 my knees
 He kneels before you to require his
 doom.

Queen. I have no remedy for fear;
 there grows
 No herb of help to heal a coward
 heart.

Fears were not rank were faults not
 rank in him.

Crawford. It is no caitiff doubt that
 pleads with you,
 No rootless dread sprung of a craven
 mood

That bows him down before your high-
 ness' foot

To take the sovereign sentence of your
 eye

And bide and bear its judgment given
 as God's:

He knows, he says, by proof and speech
 of men

What cause he has what friends of
 yours to fear.

Queen. What! must I ride alone to
 comfort him?

Tell him he may sleep sure, then, though
 I come:

Lord Bothwell is bound back to Edin-
 burgh;

There is no man to affright him in my
 train

But grooms and lackeys; and, for all
 I hear,

He never feared my women.

Crawford. Please it you,

My master doth but wish all hearts of
 men

Were on their faces written with their
 faith.

Queen. Hath he no more than this,
 our lord, to say?

Then let him hold his peace; and bear
 him word

That of our grace we come to cherish
 him

With not a man's face to procure his
 dread.

Tell him so much, and bid him keep
 good heart,

If heart he have, even for my sake,
 who swear

He shall not long live in this fear of
 me.

SCENE XIII. — DARNLEY'S LODGING IN GLASGOW.

DARNLEY *on a couch, as sick*; CRAW-
 FORD *in attendance.*

Darnley. She is come in, then?

Crawford. Presently she comes.

Darnley. You found her yet more
 sharp of eye than tongue?

Crawford. Ay.

Darnley. Would I had but strength
 to bring myself

Forth of this land where none will pity
 me, —

No, not the least of all you, though I
 die.

Who comes with her? what house-
 hold? I would speak

With Joachim her French fellow there,
 to know

Why she should come, — you cannot
 show me, — ay,

And if for good; and if they come with
 her, —

Her outland folk and Bothwell's, — or,
 at least,

If she have mind yet to send off or
no

Joseph, her dead knave's brother. Are
you sure

Himself shall come not? wherefore, be-
ing come in,

Should she not lodge beside me? Nay,
I hear

More than she wots of, and have spies
that see

What counsels breed among the crew
of them.

What talk was that of marriage that
should be

Between her fiddler and no maid of
hers,

To what fair end? Would God I
might take ship!

I would make speed for England; there
at least

They durst not lay their nets about my
life:

Here every wind that blows hath smells
of blood.

I am lost and doomed; lost, lost!

Crawford. Have better thoughts.

Take hope to you, and cheer.

Darnley. Ay, ay, much cheer!

Ye are all in one to abuse me, snare
and slay, —

Ye are all one heart to hate, one hand
to smite;

I have none to love nor do me good,
not one,

One in the world's width, of all souls
alive.

I am dead and slain already in your
hearts.

By God, if ever I stand up strong again,
I will be even with all you. Doth she
think

I fear her? there is none that lives I
fear.

What said she to you?

Crawford. With her last breath she
said

You should no longer live in fear of
her.

Darnley. Why, so I do not: nay, nor
ever did.

Let her come now, and find I fear her
not.

What shall she say?

(*Without.*) Make way there for the
queen!

Enter the QUEEN, attended.

Queen. How is it with our lord?

Darnley. Ill is it, — ill,

Madam, and no lord but your servant
here.

Will you not kiss me?

Queen. Nay, you are sick indeed.

Let me sit here, and give me but your
hand.

I have a word with you to speak for
love,

And not for chiding.

Darnley. I beseech you, no:

I have no force to bear man's chiding
now,

Being sick, and all my sickness is of
you,

That look so strange and heavily on
me;

Howbeit I could now die, I am made so
glad,

For very joy to see you. If I die,

Look, I leave all things to your only
will,

And of my pure love make no testa-
ment,

Nor lay no charge on any else for
love.

Queen. I will rebuke you not but
tenderly,

As a right wife and faithful woman.
Sir,

What word was that you wrote me, and
wherein

And wherefore taxing some for cruelty,
Of what suspicion misconceived and

born,
That came forth of your hand to strike
my heart?

You that have found no cause, and will
not say

You have found or shall find ever cause
of fear,

So to misdoubt me, — what could sting
you so,

What adder-headed thought or venom-
ous dream,

To make you shoot at this bared breast
to you

Suspicion winged and whetted with ill
thoughts?

What words were these to write, what
doubts to breed,
Of mere mistrust and stark unfriendli-
ness?

Nay, and I know not, God can witness
me,

So much as what you doubt or what
misdeem,

Or wherein hold me dangerous or my
friends,

More than I know what source your
sickness hath,

Whereof I would fain think all this
is bred

And all ill fears grown but of feverish
nights.

What cause most ails you? or what
think you on?

Darnley. I think how I am punished,
—ay, God knows

I am punished that I made my God of
you.

What should I mean of cruelty but
yours,

That will not look on my sore peni-
tence

For my least sin, as God would look on
all?

Though I confess wherein I have failed
indeed,

Yet never in worse kind than was
avowed;

And many a man for such revolt as
mine

Hath had your pardon: in this kind I
have sinned,

Not in such wise as ever I denied,
And am yet young; and though you

should cast up
How often being forgiven I have gone
back,

And fallen in fresh offence of you that
late

Forgave me, may not any twice or
thrice

So slip that is none older than I am,
Or slack his promise plighted, yet in

the end,
Repenting, by experience be chastised?

If my weak years and grief may get but
grace,

I swear I never shall make fault again;
And this is all, and honest, that I crave,

To have again my wife to bed and
board,

Which if I may not by consent of you
Out of this bed I never will rise more.

I pray you tell me whereof you re-
solve,

That I may die or live, who have no
thought

But only of you; and at such luckless
time

As ever I offend you, even the offence
Grows of yourself; for when I am

wronged or wroth
If I for refuge might complain to
you

Of any that offends me, I would speak
Into no ear but yours; but being

estranged,
What now soe'er I hear, necessity

Binds me to keep it in my breast, and
hence

I am moved to try my wit on mine own
part

For very anger. Now, being at your
foot,

Will you forgive me? that for love in-
deed

And fear of you have trespassed, being
so young,

And had no good man's counsel, and
no guard,

No light, no help, no stay,—was yet
scarce man,

And have so loved you whom I sinned
against.

Queen. Why would you pass in the
English ship away?

Darnley. I swear by God I never
thought thereon;

I spake but with the men: but though I
had,

I might have well ta'en hold on such a
thought,

To hear much less things than the least
I heard.

Queen. What inquisition was it that
you made

To hear such things as fright you?
Darnley. Nay, by heaven,

I have made none; I never sought man
out

To speak with any; I swear I see no
spies.

Queen. Must I return to your own
ear again
The very words were spoken?
Darnley. I did hear
There was a letter brought you to sub-
scribe
By certain of the council, to the intent
I should be cast in prison, and with
power
To slay me by your warrant, should
I make
Resistance: Highgate said so; I con-
fess
I spake with him; my father that first
heard
Brought him to speech of me.
Queen. Spake he so much?
But Walcar, that at Stirling brought
me word
Of this man's speeches here, had heard
of him
That you with certain of our lords had
laid
A plot to take our son, and having
crowned
Reign for him king of Scots; whereon
the man,
Being had before our council with good
speed,
Swore he knew no such tale, and had
but heard
Some rumour blown of your imprison-
ment,
But nothing of your slaying; to which
again
His witness summoned gave him
straight the lie.
Yet would I not conceive the tale for
true,
That, being incensed with some of our
loyal lords
Who were not of the faction that should
lay
Such regency upon you for your son,
You had threatened them aloud with
wrath to come.
What say you to it?
Darnley. I say you do me wrong
To speak to me of him that as you say
Belied me to you: who saith so of me
lies,
And I will pluck his ears from off his
head,

The knave whose tongue so misdelivers
me.
And, I beseech you, think he lies that
saith
I would be wroth with any man your
friend,
Or would not rather give away my life
Than by despite toward such displease
you: yet
I have heard strange things here of a
trustier tongue.
The Laird — you know him — of Minto,
my fast friend,
If any friend be fast on earth to me,
He told me to what bond what hands
were set;
Yea, and more hands than those that
signed me dead,
He swore, were set to slay me; but
God knows
I gave no faith to it, — would not dream
or doubt
You could devise, that were my proper
flesh,
To do me any evil; nay, I said
It was well seen you would not, by their
writ
Against my life that you subscribed
not; else,
Could I think once you hungered for
my death,
God knows I would not hold you
hungering long,
But make mine own throat naked for
your knife
As readily as your hand could pluck it
forth:
Howbeit the best man of mine enemies
else
Should buy me dear — ay, any of all
but you,
Except he took me sleeping; as in-
deed
Were now not hard to take me: had I
but
A hand to help my heart, and health to
go,
A foot to stand against them, God and
you,
Madam, should oversee us and judge;
but now
You see what power I have, what hope
of help,

What strength to serve my will and my
best heart

Lies in my broken body; ay, these
know that,

What force is left to second my good-
will

They know who durst not else devise
or do,

Had I the natural might yet of my
limbs,

What now — But you, if you have pity
of me,

Seeing me how faint I am and how sore
sick

And cannot eat for weakness, though I
faint,

That makes me loathe my meat, — but
will you not

Feed me and kiss me? surely I could
live,

Being quickened of your hands and
piteous lips,

So sweet you are, and strong, and large
of life.

Nay, do but kiss me once though I
must die,

Be it but lest all men say you loved me
not.

Queen. I have a pain here takes me
in my side —

I pray you — where my sickness left it
sore

And liable to swift pains yet: pardon
me.

Darnley. 'Tis I you cannot pardon, —
I, woe's me,

You cannot love or pardon; but I
swear,

So be it you will not leave me, I will go,
So but I may not lose you out of sight,

Borne in a litter, such as here I lie,
So weak, so full of sickness, where you
will,

Be it to Craigmillar, though death went
with me,

Or to the world's end, going in sight of
you.

Queen. Have here my hand, then, and
my faith to it, sir,

When there the healing springs have
washed you whole

As they shall surely, with cold cleans-
ing streams

Whose medicinal might shall bathe
your veins,

And kill the fire that feeds upon their
blood,

I will once more dwell with you as your
wife,

In all the lovely works and ways of
love

And dues of duteous life and unity
That man may claim of woman. Tell
me now, —

Ere we go thither, where the leech and
I

May help you, nor be far off from my
son, —

What are those lords you are wroth at?
since I hear

Some are there that you threaten, as in
doubt

Their minds are bitter toward you:
shall I say

You stand in fear of Maitland?
Darnley. Him? not I, —

I pray you, speak not of him for my
sake, —

I stand in fear of no man: I beseech
you,

Speak me not of him; I will see no
man,

To be our makebate and your tale-
bearer;

I have heard too of your brother, how
he says

I spake with him at Stirling, where I
swear

I came not in his chamber, spake not
half

Of all whereof he has rounded in your
ear

That I made plaint to him concerning
you;

For all my faults are published in your
eye,

And I deny not one, and naught put
off:

What should it boot me to deny my
speech?

But there are they that think the faults
they make

Shall to all time lie still unspoken of,
Yet will they speak aloud of small and
great,

And tax alike all faults of other folk,

The least fault as the worst, in men
 like me
 That have not craft to hide or most or
 least.
 God save you from such friendship: it
 is thought,
 Through power upon you of such evil
 tongues,
 Yourself have not your power upon
 yourself,
 As by your slight still of my proffered
 love
 I would believe you have not; such a
 friend
 Rode with you hither, — or unfriend as
 I doubt:
 I like her not, — the Lady Reres, your
 friend;
 I pray God she may serve you, if she
 be,
 To your own honor; it runs through all
 men's mouths,
 She was Lord Bothwell's harlot, who
 stands marked
 For a lewd liver above all men alive:
 She and her sister both lie side by side
 Under the like report of his rank
 love, —
 Foul concord and consent unsisterlike
 In such communion as beasts shun for
 shame.
 Nay, for you know it, it lives on com-
 mon lips,
 Cries from all tongues, — you know it;
 but for my part
 I will love all that love you, though
 they were
 But for that love's sake shameful in
 men's eyes.
 Why will you wake not with me this
 one night,
 But so soon leave me, and I sleep so
 ill?

Queen. Nay, though this night I may
 not watch with you,
 I leave you not till you turn back with
 me;
 But for the lords' sake must it not be
 known,
 That, if you change not purpose ere
 that time,
 When you are whole, we shall be one
 again;

Lest when they know it, remembering
 your loud threat
 To make them find, if ever we agreed,
 What small account they had made of
 you, and how
 You had counselled me to take not
 some of them
 To grace again without assent of yours,
 They fall in fear and jealousy, to see
 The scene so broken and the play so
 changed
 Without their knowledge, that contrari-
 wise
 Was first set up before them.

Darnley. Think you then
 They will for that the more esteem of
 you?
 But I am glad at heart you speak of
 them,
 And do believe now you desire indeed
 That we should live together in quiet-
 ness;
 For, were it otherwise, to both of us
 Might worse fall than we wot of; but I
 now
 Will do whatever you will do, and love
 All that you love; and I have trust in
 you
 To draw them in like manner to my
 love;
 Whom since I know they aim not at my
 life
 I will love all alike, and there shall be
 No more dissension of your friends and
 mine.

Queen. It was by fault of you all
 this fell out
 That I must heal. For this time, fare
 you well;
 When I get rest, I will return again.

[*Exit with attendants.*]

Darnley. What say you now? she is
 gentler in mine eyes

Crauford. Ay, sweet to sight,
 Exceeding gentle. Wherefore, could
 one tell,
 Should she desire to lead you so in
 hand
 Just to Craigmillar? whence report
 came late
 Of no good counsel toward you or good
 hope,

Except the hope be good, there to be
 healed
 Of all life's ill forever, once being
 bathed
 In the cold springs of death ; and hence
 meseems
 More like a prisoner than her wedded
 lord
 Are you borne off as in her bonds.

Darnley. By heaven,
 I think but little less, and fear myself,
 Save for the trust indeed I have in her
 And in her promise only ; howsoe'er,
 I will go with her, and put me in her
 hands,

Though she should cut my throat ; and
 so may God

Between us both be judge. I have
 been men's fool

That were but tongues and faces of my
 friends :

I see by mine own sight now, and will
 stand

On no man's feet but mine. Give me
 to drink ;

I will sleep now ; my heart is healed
 of fear.

SCENE XIV. — THE QUEEN'S APART-
 MENT IN THE SAME.

The QUEEN and PARIS.

Queen. Here is the letter for your
 lord to know

I bring the man on Monday, as is writ,
 Hence to Craigmillar. Say too this by
 mouth, —

The Lady Reres can witness with mine
 oath

I would not let him kiss me. Bid our
 lord,

Mine and your lord, inquire of Mait-
 land first

If our past purpose for Craigmillar
 hold,

Or if the place be shifted, and send
 word

To me that here await his will by you.
 Be of good speed ; I say not of good
 trust,

Who know you perfect in his trust and
 mine.

Farewell.

Paris. I am gone with all good haste
 I may,

And here come back to serve your maj-
 esty.

Hath it no further counsel or command
 To be my message ?

Queen. Tell him, night and day
 And fear and hope are grown one thing
 to me

Save for his sake : and say mine hours
 and thoughts

Are as one fire devouring grain 'by
 grain

This pile of tares and drift of crum-
 bling brands

That shrivels up in the slow breath of
 time

The part of life that keeps me far from
 him,

The heap of dusty days that sunder
 us.

I would I could burn all at once away,
 And our lips meet across the mid red
 flame,

Thence unconsumed, being made of
 keener fire

Than any burns on earth. Say that
 mine eyes

Ache with mine heart, and thirst with
 all my veins,

Requiring him they have not. Say my
 life

Is but as sleep, and my sleep very life,
 That dreams upon him. Say I am
 passing now

To do that office he would have me do,
 Which almost is a traitor's ; say, his
 love

Makes me so far dissemble, that myself
 Have horror at it ; bid him keep in
 mind

How, were it not to obey him, I had
 rather

Be dead before I did it ; let him not
 Have ill opinion of me for this cause,
 Seeing he is alone the occasion of it
 himself,

Since for mine own particular revenge
 I would not do it to him that I most
 hate ;

My heart bleeds at it. Say, he will
 not come

But on condition I shall cleave to him
 Hereafter, and on that word given of
 mine

Will go where I would have him go:
 alas!
 I never have deceived yet any man,
 But I remit me to my master's will
 In all things wholly; bid him send me
 word
 What I shall do, and come what may
 thereof
 I shall obey him; if some new subtler
 way
 By medicine may be thought on when I
 bring
 The man here to Craigmillar, that as
 yet
 May not this long time of himself go
 forth
 Out of the house, let him advise him-
 self
 How to put this in hand: for all I find,
 This man I here endure to play upon
 Lives now in great suspicion; yet my
 word
 Hath credit with him, but not far
 enough
 For him to show me any thing; but yet
 I shall draw forth of him what thing I
 will
 If my lord bid me be more plain with
 him;
 But I will never take delight to wrong
 The trust of any that puts trust in me;
 Yet may my lord command me in all
 things.
 And though by checks and hints of that
 I feared
 This man sometimes even touch me to
 the quick
 With words dropt of mine honor and
 my power
 On mine own self, whereby I surely
 know
 That he suspects him of the thing we
 wot
 And of his life, yet as to that last fear
 I need but say some three good words
 to him,
 And he rejoices, and is out of doubt.
 He was seen never as gay of mood as
 now
 When I make show of grace and gentle
 heart,
 And puts me in remembrance of all
 things

That may assure my faith he loves me
 well.
 Let not my love suspect me for his
 sake,
 Who take such great joy of his love-
 making
 That I come never where he is but
 straight
 I take the sickness of my sore side here,
 I am vexed so with it; wearied might
 he be,
 This poisonous man that gives me all
 this pain,
 When I would speak of things far
 sweeter; yet
 He is marred not overmuch of form or
 face,
 Though he have borne much, and his
 venom'd breath
 Hath almost slain me though I sit far
 off.
 He would have had me watch with him,
 but I
 Put off the night; he says he sleeps not
 sound.
 He never spake more humbly nor more
 well;
 And if I had not proven his heart of
 wax,
 And were not mine cut of a diamond
 Whereinto no shot ever can make
 breach
 But that which flies forth of mine own
 love's hand,
 I had almost had pity of him; but
 say
 I bid the captain of my fortified heart
 Fear not; the place shall hold unto the
 death.
 And bid my love in recompense thereof
 Let not his own be won by that false
 kind
 That will no less strive with him for the
 same.
 I think the twain were trained up in
 one school,
 For he hath ever tear in eye, and makes
 Most piteous moan to arouse men's
 pity, yea,
 Humbly salutes them all, even to the
 least,
 To make their hearts soft toward him;
 and desires

That with mine own hands I would give
 him meat;
 But let my lord, where he is, give no
 more trust
 Than I shall here. Tell him all this;
 and say
 I am in the doing here of a work I
 hate
 Past measure; and should make him
 fain to laugh
 To see me lie so well, or at the least
 So well dissemble, and tell him truth
 'twixt hands.
 Say, by the flatteries I perforce must
 make
 And prayers to him to assure himself
 of me,
 And by complaint made of the men de-
 signed,
 I have drawn out of him all we list to
 know,
 Yet never touched one word of that
 your lord
 Showed me, but only wrought by wiles;
 and say
 With two false kinds we are coupled, I
 and he,
 My love; the Devil dissever us, and
 God
 Knit us together for the faithfulest pair
 That ever he made one: this is my
 faith,
 I will die in it. Excuse me to my lord,
 That I writ ill last night, being ill at
 ease,
 And when the rest were sleeping was
 most glad
 To write unto him, who might no more,
 nor could
 Sleep as they did and as I would de-
 sire,
 Even in my dear love's arms; whom I
 pray God
 Keep from all evil, and send him all
 repose.
 And being so long my letter hindered
 me
 To write what tidings of myself I would,
 Who had wrought before for two hours
 of the day
 Upon this bracelet I would send to him,
 Though it be evil made, for fault of
 time,

I have had so little, and I can get no
 lock,
 Though, that mine hands might end it
 yester-eve,
 I would not see the man; but this mean
 time
 I think to make one fairer: let him not
 Bring it in sight of any that was here,
 For all would know it, seeing it was
 wrought for haste
 In sight of them; yet might it bring
 some harm,
 And may be seen if he should chance
 be hurt;
 Let him send word if he will have
 it, and say
 If he will have more gold by you, and
 when
 I shall return, and how far I may speak;
 For this man waxes mad to hear of him
 Or of my brother; and when I visit
 him
 His friends come all to be my convoy,
 say,
 And he desires me come the morn
 betimes
 And see him rise. This letter that I
 send,
 Bid my lord burn it, being so dangerous,
 With naught in it well said,—for all
 my mind
 Was on this craft I loathe to think
 upon,—
 And if it find his hand in Edinburgh,
 Let him soon send me word, and that I
 doubt
 Be not offended, since to doubts of him
 I give not o'er-great credit; but say
 this,
 That seeing to obey him, who is my
 dear heart's love,
 I spare nor honor, conscience, hazard,
 state,
 Nor greatness whatsoever, I beseech
 him
 But that he take it in good part, and
 not
 As his false brother-in-law interprets,
 whom
 I pray him give not ear to nor believe
 Against the faithfulest lover he ever
 had
 Or ever shall have; nor cast eye on her

Whose feigned tears should not be
esteemed so much
Nor prized so as the true and faithful
toils
Which I sustain but to deserve her
place:
Whereto that I despite all bonds may
climb,
Against my nature I betray them here
That may prevent me from it; God for-
give me,
And God give him, my only love, the
hap
And welfare which his humble and
faithful love
Desires of him; who hopes to be to
him
Ere long a thing new-named for recom-
pense
Of all her irksome travails. Tell him
this;
Say I could never stint of hand or
tongue
To send love to him, and that I kiss his
hands,
Ending; and let him think upon his
love,
And write to her, and that oft; and
read twice through
Mine evil-written letter, and keep in
mind
All several sayings writ of the man
therein.
Say for delight I have to send to him
I run twice over all the words I send,
And that each word may fasten in his
ear
As in his eye, and you may witness me
That hand and tongue and heart were
one to send,
Put all my message in your lips again
That here was written. Say—I know
not what;
I can say naught but with my silent
hands,
Speak with the lips of deeds I do for
him.
Puris. Shall I say nothing of Lord
Darnley more?
Queen. Say, when I did but speak of
Maitland once,
His caitiff flesh quaked in each joint of
him,

Each limb and bone shivered; even to
the feet
He shook, and his shrunk eyes were
stark with fright,
That like a live thing shuddered in his
hair,
And raised it ruffling from the roots for
dread.
Let him mark that: though coward the
man be, and fool,
He has wit and heart enough to know
the worst
Of his wrong-doing, and to what man-
ner of man,
Being fool, he did it, and discerning
him
Think whether his cause of dread be
small or no
For less or more of peril. So to horse,
And lose no word sent of my heart to
him.

SCENE XV. — KIRK OF FIELD.

Enter BOTHWELL.

Bothwell. This is the time and here
the point of earth
That is to try what fate will make of
me.
I hold here in my hand my hand's
desire,
The fruit my life has climbed for; day
on day
Have I strid over, stretching toward
this prize
With all my thews and spirits. I must
be glad,
If I could think; yet even my cause of
joy
Doth somewhat shake me, that my
sense and soul
Seem in their springs confused, even as
two streams
Violently mingling: what is here to do
Is less now than the least I yet have
done,
Being but the putting once of the mere
hand
To the thing done already in device,
Wrought many times out in the work-
ing soul.
Yet my heart revels not, nor feel I now
The blood again leap in me for delight

That in the thought grew riotous and
beat high
With foretaste of possession unpos-
sessed.

Is it that in all alike fruition slacks
The shrunk imagination? in all deeds
The doing undoes the spirit to do, the
joy

Sickens, the lust is swallowed as of
sand?

Why, yet the stream should run of my
desire

Unshrunk, and no deserts drink it up,
Being unfulfilled; no satiate sluggish-
ness

Gape with dry lips at the edge of the
dry cup

For the poor lees of longing. I am
here

Not royal yet, nor redder in the hand
Than war has dyed me fighting; the
thing done

Is but for me done, since I hold it so,
Not yet for him that in the doing must
bleed;

I that stand up to do it, and in my
mind

Behold across it mightier days for
deeds,

Should not be way-sick yet nor travel-
tired,

Before I drink fulfilment as a wine;
And here must it restore me.

Enter PARIS.

Ha! so soon?

What news of her?

Paris. The queen commends to you
Her best heart in this letter, and would
know

How yet your purpose toward Craigmillar bears,

Whether to train him thither by her
hand

Or what choice else.

Bothwell. Say, the device is changed
By counsel and consent of whom she
wots;

Here must they come; James Balfour
and myself

Have waked all night to see things well
begun,

For that bond's sake whereto his hand
was set

With mine here at Craigmillar; all
things now

Stand apt and fit in this his brother's
house

To entertain the kingship of its guest;
We have seen to it, Maitland with us.

Paris. I was sent

From the town hither, finding you se?
forth,

But why, folk wist not.

Bothwell. Carry to my queen

This diamond; say too I would send
my heart,

But that she hath already, and no need
To pluck it forth and feel it in her
hand.

Bid her be swift as we have been for
love,

And the more surety quickens our de-
sign:

The rest unsaid shall tarry till she
come.

SCENE XVI.—THE QUEEN'S LODGING IN GLASGOW.

*The QUEEN in bed; LADY RERES and
PARIS attending.*

Queen. What was his word at part-
ing? let it kiss

Mine ear again.

Paris. Being horsed, he bade me say,
Madam, he would be fain for love of
you

To train a pike all his life-days.

Queen. Please God,

It shall not come to that. Ere this
month die

That has not half a week to live, we
stand

In Edinburgh together. He will go
Without more word or fear; and being
well hence—

How looked my love?

Paris. Madam, as one uplift

To the height of heart and hope, though
full of cares,

And keen in resolution.

Queen. I grow strong

To hear of him. Hath he not heart
enough

To fill with blood a hundred of our
hearts,

Put force and daring, for the fear cast
 out,
 In all our veins made manlike? Prithee,
 Reres,
 Was he thus ever? had he so great
 heart
 In those dead days, such lordliness of
 eye
 To see and smite and burn in master-
 dom,
 Such fire and iron of design and deed
 To serve his purpose and sustain his
 will?

Hath he not grown, since years that
 knew me not,
 In light and might and speed of spirit
 and stroke

To lay swift hand upon his thought,
 and turn

Its cloud to flame, its shadow to true
 shape,

Its emptiness to fulness? If in sooth
 He was thus always, he should be by
 now

Hailed the first head of the earth.

Lady Reres. It cannot be

But in your light he hath waxed, and
 from your love,

Madam, drawn life and increase; but
 indeed

His heart seemed ever high and mas-
 terful

As of a king unkingdomed, and his eye
 As set against the sunrise; such a brow
 As craves a crown to do it right, and
 hand

Made to hold empire swordlike, and a
 foot

To tread the topless and unfooted hill
 Whose light is from the morn of
 majesty.

Queen. When mine eye first took
 judgment of his face,

It read him for a king born; and his
 lips

Touching my hand for homage had as
 'twere

Speech without sound in them that
 bowed my heart

In much more homage to his own.
 Would God

I could so read now, in that heart I
 serve,

What thought of me moves in it, hear
 what word

Now hangs upon those lips; if now his
 eye

Darken or lighten toward mine unseen
 face,

Or his ear hearken for my speech un-
 heard.

Why art thou now not with him, and
 again

Here the same hour to tell me? I
 would have

More messengers than minutes that
 divide

Mine eyes from their desire, to bring
 me word,

With every breath, of every change in
 him,

If he but rest or rise; nay, might it be,
 Of every thought or heart-beat that
 makes up

His inner hours of life: yet, by mine
 own,

If he so loved me, should I know them
 not.

I will rise now, and pass to see how
 soon

We may set forth to-morrow.

Lady Reres. Can it be

He shall have strength? but let your
 highness heed

That pretext be not given for knaves to
 say

You had no care to wait on his good
 time,

But vexed and harried him, being sick,
 with haste

And timeless heat of travel.

Queen. Fear not you:

I will make means to bring him in my
 hand

As a tame hound, and have his thanks
 and love

For bringing him so wifelike on his way.
 It is the last pain I shall take for him,

The last work I shall do for marriage-
 sake

And wifhood well nigh done with duty
 now.

I have not much more time to serve
 my lord,

And strife shall fall between us twain
 no more.

SCENE XVII.—DARNLEY'S CHAMBER
IN KIRK OF FIELD.

DARNLEY and NELSON.

Darnley. Thou hast the keys? This house is strange and chill, —
As chill as earth: I have slept no better here.

Those two days that we halted on the way

There at Linlithgow, I could see the haste

That burnt in her to be in Edinburgh,
And here being come she sets me in this grange,

And till her chamber be made ready sleeps

In Holyrood apart, and here by day
Hath still by her that face I warned her from,

That woman's that I spake of, plays and sings

There in the garden with none else; by God,

I like not aught of it. I am sick again,
Sick-hearted, or my will should be a sword

To sunder them. I would I were away.
I have ill dreams, man.

Nelson. Please your highness —

Darnley. Ay!

Is majesty gone out of all men's mouths?

Is my state dead before me, even the name

Dead of my place, then?

Nelson. There is come from court
Lord Robert Stuart to see your majesty.

Darnley. Let him come in. Robert? he was my friend;

I think he held me dear till David died:

He supped with them that night. I found him once

A quick-souled fellow that would quaff and kiss

The glow of woman's or a wine-cup's mouth,

And laugh as mine own lips that loved the like

Can now no more this long time. Let him come.

Enter ROBERT STUART.

My holy lord of Holyrood-house, good day;

You find a fit man for a ghostly rede.

Robert Stuart. I am glad you have a jest yet; but I come

On graver foot than jesters run, my lord.

Darnley. How, graver than your ghostly name? nay, then

'Tis matter for a grave-side.

Robert Stuart. Sir, it may;

I would be secret with you.

Darnley. What, alone?

Why should we talk alone? what secret? why?

Robert Stuart. I will put off my sword, and give it your man,

If that will ease you.

Darnley. Ease me? what! by God,

You think I fear you come to kill me?

Tush,

I am not the fool — and were that all, being thus,

'Faith, you might end me with your naked hands.

Leave us. [*Exit NELSON.*]

What is it? you make me not afraid — Sir, I fear no man: what, — for God's sake speak,

I am not moved, — in God's name, let me have it.

Robert Stuart. I came to do you such good service, sir,

As none has done you better, nor can do.

There is an old phrase in men's mouths of one

That stands between the devil and the deep sea;

So now stand you; the man that toward a reef

Drives naked on a thunderstricken wreck

And helmless, hath not half your cause of fear;

The wretch that drops plague-eaten limb from limb

Crumbles to death not half so fast as you:

The grave expects not the new-shrouded man

More surely than your corpse now coffinless.

Darnley. Who put this in your mouth? what enemy?

How have you heart, or whosoe'er he be,

Albeit ye hate me as the worm of hell
Who never harmed you in my hapless days,

To use me so? I am sick —

Robert Stuart. Ay, sick to death,
If you give ear not to me that am come
In very mercy, seeing I called you friend,

For pity's sake to save you, or at least
To stretch your days out for some brief span more

Of life now death-devoted.

Darnley. What, so soon?
God would not have it done, so young I am, —

What have I done that he should give me up?

So comfortless, — who hath no help of man,

They say, hath God's; God help me! for God knows

There is none living hath less help of man.

Nay, and he must, as I have faith in God,

Hang all my hope upon him. For God's sake,

Whence got you this?

Robert Stuart. No matter.

Darnley. At whose hand —
O me, what hand! who is it shall touch me?

Robert Stuart. Hark!
From beneath is heard the QUEEN'S voice, singing.

*Qui se fie
À la vie*

*A vau-l'eau va vers la mort ;
Et que l'onde
Rie ou gronde,
Elle entraîne loin du port.*

Darnley. She sings I know not what,
— a jesting song,
A French court rhyme no graver than a flower,
Fruitless of sense: this is no threat — a toy —

QUEEN (*from beneath, sings*).

*Sur l'opale
Du flot pâle*

*Tremble un peu de jour encor ;
Sur la plage
Au naufrage*

Le haut vent sonne du cor.

Darnley. What is it she sings now? nay, what boots to hear?
I will not hear; speak to me, — pray you, speak.

QUEEN (*from beneath*).

*La mort passe
Comme en chasse,*

*Et la foudre aboie aux cieux ;
L'air frissonne,
La mer tonne,*

Le port se dérobe aux yeux.

*Plus d'étoile
Que ne voile*

*L'orage âpre au soufflé noir ;
Pas de brise
Qui ne brise*

Quelque vaisseau sans espoir.

*Noire et nue
Sous la nue,*

*La nef brisée à moitié
Tourne et vire
Où l'attire*

La sombre mer sans pitié.

*La nuit passe,
Et la chasse*

*S'est éteinte au fond des cieux ;
Mais l'aurore
Pleure encore*

Sur les morts qu'ont vus ses yeux

*Ce qui tombe
Dans la tombe*

*Coule et s'en va sans retour ;
Quand sous l'ombre
Plonge et combre*

Où la vie ou bien l'amour.

Robert Stuart. Why do you shake, and hide your eyes? take heart; let fear not be more swift to slay than hate.

Darnley. I said, what hand? you bade me hearken: well,
What say you now she sings not?

Robert Stuart. I have said.

Darnley. I will not be your baiting-stock; speak plain:
Whence had you word of any plot on me?

Robert Stuart. If you will heed me, well; if not, for me
I will take heed yet that it be not ill.
Weigh how you will my counsel, I am sure

If my word now lie lightly in your ear
It would not lie the heavier for my oath
Or any proof's assurance. Whence I had

This word you have of me, I am not bound

To put the knowledge into trust of you
Who trust not me in asking.

Darnley. What! I knew
There was no plot but yours to scare me, none, —
Your plot to get my favor, stay yourself

On me as on a staff, — affright me sick
With blood-red masks of words and painted plots,

And so take hold upon me afterward
Having my strength again and state and power;

A worthy friend and timely. — Nay, but, nay,

I meant not so — I am half distraught — I meant,

I know you for my friend indeed and true:

For one thwart word in sickness cast not off

Your friend that puts his trust in you, your friend

That was nigh mad a minute, being sore sick

And weak, and full of pain and fear, and hath

No friend to help and bear with him if you

Will help nor bear not. By my faith and life,

I do believe you love me, and in love Came, and in faith to me: if I believe not,

God give me death at once and hell to boot.

I pray you pardon.

Robert Stuart. Sir, your faith and life
Have neither weight enough to poise an oath

As now they hang in balance. If you will,

Take to your heart my words; if not, be sure

It shall not grieve me though you trust me not,

Who never think to give you counsel more. *[Exit.]*

Darnley. Nay, but one word — how would you have me fly?

He goes, and mocks me. Would my hands had strength

To dig his heart out for my dogs to feed!

He flies, and leaves me weaponless alone

In the eye of peril, coward and false heart —

Should not the tongue be false too? If he came

To affright me only with a fearful face,
Blow but a blast of danger in mine ear,
And make my faith as wax that in his breath

Might melt and be re-shapen of his hands —

Nay, I will see the queen, and in her eye

Read if his tongue spake truth, and from her lips

Draw forth his witness; if she mean me ill,

I cannot now but see it. Nelson! — She hath

No trick to keep her from mine instant sight,

Knows not his errand to me; and at once

I take her unawares and catch her soul
Naked, her mind plain to me, good or ill.

QUEEN (sings from below).

*Lord Love went maying
Where Time was playing,
In light hands weighing
Light hearts with sad;*

*Crowned king with peasant,
Pale past with present,
Harsh hours with pleasant,
Good hopes with bad ;
Nor dreamed how fleet
Than Time's swift metre,
O'er all things sweeter
How clothed with power,
The murderess maiden
Mistrust walks laden
With red fruit ruined and dead
white flower.*

Darnley. What sting is in that song
to smite my heart,
And make the blood and breath come
short in me ?

O God ! I know it — his last year's song
of death :

They struck it on his lips who struck
him through.

Nelson ! I will not see her — I will
not die —

Enter the QUEEN.

Queen. I heard your call from under,
and came in —

What ails you, sir ? why stare you thus
askance ?

Darnley. I had a pang of sickness
that passed by

While you were singing.

Queen. Is my brother gone ?

Darnley. There was none here —
Your brother ? what, the earl ?

Doth not his wife lie at St. Andrew's
sick,

Where he is gone to visit her ?

Queen. For love,

Why will you lie to me in jest ? you
know

Here was my brother Robert.

Darnley. Ay, but now —

I did not say he was not here but now.

Queen. Has he not moved you ?

Darnley. Why should I be moved ?

I am not lightly shaken of men's breath ;
What think you that he came to move
me for ?

Queen. In faith, I guess not.

Darnley. Nay, though I be weak,

I am no need yet for him to blow and
make

What music of me shall best please his
mouth.

Queen. I think you are not, but for
all winds blown

Of fears and threats fixed and un-
shakable.

What said he to you that has moved
you not ?

Darnley. Nothing.

Queen. What ! you were moved then
of his words ?

Darnley. I say I was not.

Queen. He said nothing, then ?

You held discourse but of days foul or
fair,

Skies wet or dry, seasons and acci-
dents,

All things and nothing ?

Darnley. Would you not know that ?

Queen. Even as you list or list not,
so would I.

Darnley. What if it please me you
should know this not ?

Queen. Why, you do wisely, seeing I
love you not.

Darnley. I did not say so ; I may
hold my peace,

Yet not for doubt that irks me of your
love.

Queen. Surely you may ; good rea-
sons may stand thick

As buds in April, in your judgment's
sight,

To cover both your counsels from mine
eye

That has no lust to invade your secre-
cies.

Darnley. And if it please me show
it, as now it shall,

You will not dread I doubt your love
of me.

Queen. I have not heart to dread
the doubt I know

You have not heart to harbor of my
love.

Darnley. Why, he came here to warn
me of my life.

Queen. Your life ?

Darnley. Ay, mine ; and what now
say you to him ?

Queen. I say he spake as your good
friend and mine.

Darnley. Ay ?

Queen. What more kindness could
be shown of man

Than in your ear to warn me of your life

If it so stand in peril?

Darnley. What! you think
He told it me to have me tell it you?

Queen. It was done gently, brother-like, for fear

The word of danger being first heard by me

Should strike too sharp upon my slighter soul,

And pierce my woman's sense with such quick pangs

As might dethrone my judgment, shake my wits

To feminine confusion, and by force Disable my swift thoughts, now maimed

with dread,
From their defence and office: he did well,

And my heart thanks him, showing you first his fear,

Who are manlike of your mood and mould of mind,

And have but for your own life to take thought,

Not for one dearer; as, I know you well,

By mine own heart I know, to have heard of me

Endangered would have killed your heart with fear,

That in your personal peril beats at ease

With blood as perfect as I see you now,
With pulse thus changeless, and with cheek thus calm.

Indeed I thank him for it, and twice I thank,

That he would serve you, and would scare not me.

Where said he was this danger?

Darnley. Nay, by God,
That would he not say; that I nothing know;

Save by some hint of shoulder or writhed lip

That seemed to shoot at you; and when you sang

He bade me hearken, and would speak no more.

Queen. At me! but if such fire be on his tongue,

It should be forked, and set on fire of hell.

At me! but if he be not mad, to you He shall approve it, instant face to face,

Eye to confronted eye, word against word,

He shall maintain or mark himself for liar, —

With his own fire and iron brand the brow

That burned not to belie me.

Darnley. Sweet, not here:
Would I could fight with him! but being o'erthrown

Of my disease already, to what end Should he come back now, save to insult on me

Who have no hand to strike at him again

In championship of you?

Queen. He shall come back,
And twice shall oversay the word he said

In your own ear, or else unswear it. What!

Shall I be put to shame of mine own blood,

To mine own lord in mine own love maligned,

Stricken with slanderous fangs of speech, and stabbed

In my heart's core of honor, yet lie still

And bleed to death dumb and dishonorable?

Rather let come the deadliest of my kin,

Mine enemies born, and bind and burn me quick,

Or ever I die thus; rather let all The false blood of my father in strange veins

Be set on fire against me, and its heat Consume my fame with my frail flesh, and make

My scaffold of my kingdom; rather fall

My naked head beneath the mortal axe,

And with my blood my name be spilt and shed,

Than this charge come upon me.

Darnley. You are stirred
Beyond all right of reason; be not
moved:

You see how I believed him.

Queen. And to see
Is my soul's comfort; but this wound
that bleeds

Here in my heart's heart cannot well
be stanch'd

Till by the tongue that smote me, as
men say

That by the anointing of the sword
that hurt

The wound it made finds comfort, I be
healed.

Darnley. Nay, let him come; I will
maintain it to him:

Here, to his face, he warn'd me of my
death

Or present danger in you.

Queen. He shall come.

But lie now down, and sleep; I have
wearied you.

Darnley. I pray you sing me some-
thing then; indeed

I am weary and would forget; but now
you sang —

Doth that French song break where
you broke it off?

Queen. No, there is more. Sleep, I
will sing it you. [*Sings.*]

*Sur la grève
Rien ne rêve
Aux naufragés de la nuit;
À la trombe,
Gouffre et tombe,
Au flot qui frappe et qui fuit.*

*Apaisée
Et baisée
Par les brises sans souci,
Brûle et vibre
Au jour libre
La belle mer sans merci.*

*Tant que dure
La nuit dure
Sur la grève où rit la mort,
Sous l'orage
Flotte et nage
Le jour qui lutte et qui sort.*

*Pas de brume
Que n'allume
L'astre ou l'éclair des amours;
Pas de flamme
Qui dans l'âme
Brûle ou luit tous les jours.*

*À l'aurore
Tout se dore,
Tout se fane avant la nuit;
Et que l'heure
Chante ou pleure,
Dans une heure tout s'enfuit.*

*Cœur sans crainte,
Œil sans feinte,
Quand l'amour met voile au vent,
Sur la plage
Sans naufrage
Est-il revenu souvent?*

*L'ombre emporte
La nef morte,
Et la joie, et le beau jour;
Trop profonde
Était l'onde.
Et trop faible était l'amour.*
[*The scene closes.*]

SCENE XVIII. — BEHIND KIRK OF FIELD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HEPBURN of
BOLTON, and HAY of TALLA.

Bothwell. If it be done to-morrow,
we shall stand

The surer that the queen slept here to-
night.

Cousin, bring you my knaves from
Holyrood

At nightfall to that hinder gate where-
through

We three shall give you passage with
your charge

To the strait garden-plat beyond the
walls

Whereto the dooi that opens from be-
neath

Shall stand unbolted, and you entering
spread

Along the blind floor of the nether vault
The train that shall set all these walls
on wing.

Ormiston. How said you, that his groom here had the keys?

Bothwell. That under door which lets us down lacks none:

There is no lock to palter with: it needs

But leave the bolt undrawn; and yesterday

By the queen's order was the door removed

At bottom of the stair, to be instead
A cover for his bath-vat; so there stands

But the main door now.

Hepburn. That was well devised:

She sleeps beneath his chamber here to-night?

Bothwell. Ay, to the west.

Hay. She has the stouter heart.

I have trod as deep in the red wash
o' the wars

As who walks reddest, yet I could not sleep,

I doubt, with next night's dead man overhead.

Bothwell. We are past the season of divided wills;

Where but one thought is, nothing to be done

Has power to hurt the heart that holds it fast,

Or leave the purpose weaker by a wound

Given it of doubt or after-thought: we have

One thing to do, one eye to see it, one hand

To pluck it from the occasion; what he wills

None but a fool would mix his will to achieve

With pain and fear; the mind once shaped and set

That works, and yet looks back and weeps to do,

Is but half man's; and all a man's hath she.

Hepburn. Yet woman moulded outward, clothed upon

As 'twere with feminine raiment, touched with thoughts

Of female-colored fashion, woman's craft:

She sees and thinks on what could touch not us,

Nor graze in passing even our skirts of sense:

Takes order for the hangings of his bed

Whom we must kill to her hand, lest water soil

The sable velvet from his bath, and bids

Pluck down and save them; such slight things and strange

As take the thought and hold the eye of girls,

Her soul, as full of great things as it is, As large and fiery, bright and passionate,

Takes no less thought for, and hath heed of these

No less than of high deed and deep desire

Beyond where sight can scale or thought can dive

Of narrower eye and shallower spirit than hers.

Bothwell. Most royal is she, but of soul not all

Uncurbable, nor of all shafts that fly

Scathless, nor of all shots invulnerable;

She had no part else and no power in us,

No part in all that mingling makes up man,

No power upon our earth who are earthlier made;

She has the more might on men's ways of soul

Not being almighty, nor from all man's moods

Divided, but as passion-touched and mixed

With all such moods as men are; nay, not these,

But such as bear the rule of these, and lead

Which way they will — women's; and being so mixed

She is even the more entire, more whole and strong,

Herself and no self other. She nor I Live now on thoughts and words; the deed it is,

Our deed alone we live by, till being
done

It leave us time for life that deals with
these.

I will be with you ere night fall again
Within the town-wall; thither get you
now,

And doubt not of us.

Ormiston. Doubt not you to find
All ready by the night and need: fare-
well.

[*Exeunt all but BOTHWELL.*

Bothwell. The time is breathless;
earth sees heaven as chill
In the after air declining from high
day.

I would the winds would muster, or the
sun

Show half an eye-blink of his face that
hangs

Now downward to the sea, curbed in
with cloud,

And with a brief breath fire the rack
that flies.

Why should not flame break over
Arthur's Seat

This hour, and all the heaven with
burning tongues

Cry from the world's height to the under
line

That ends it for us gazing? If the sky
Had speech as it hath fire, or night
or day

Voice to declare God's pleasure or his
wrath

With their dumb lips of light, from
moon or sun

Or the mute mouths of stars, would
earth that heard

Take thought and counsel of the cause,
to stir

Men's hearts up for our deed's sake
here? I am wrought

Out of myself even by this pause and
peace

In heaven and earth, that will not know
of us

Nor what we compass; in this face of
things,

Here in this eye of ever-during life
That changes not in changing, fear and
hope,

The life we live, the life we take, alike

Decline and dwindle from the shape
they held,

Their import and significance: all seem
Less good and evil, worth less hate and
love,

Than we would have them for our high
heart's sake.

How shall this day, when all these days
are done,

Seem to me standing where it sets my
feet?

Nay, whence shall I behold it? or who
knows

What crest or chasm, what pit or pin-
nacle,

Shall feel my foot or gulf my body
down,

Bear up or break me falling? Fall or
stand,

At least I live not as the beasts that
serve,

But with a king's life or man's death at
last

Make all my travails perfect; and a
queen,

The fairest face I have loved and fieri-
est heart,

Shines with my star or sets.

Enter PARIS.

What sends she now?

Paris. I came to know if you stand
fixed indeed,

Sir, for to-morrow.

Bothwell. For to-morrow, man;

What ails him at to-morrow?

Paris. My dread lord,
Naught ails me but as part of your
design;

But I beseech you by your trust of me,
What says this while my lord of Mur-
ray?

Bothwell. He!

He will nor help nor hinder — but a!!'s
one.

Paris. He is wise.

Bothwell. But is it to tell me he is
wise

That you bestow your own wise tongue
on me?

Came you to advise me or to show my
trust

How cracked a casket I have closed
it in

Who trusted in so white a heart as yours?

Paris. I have a message —

Bothwell. Well, the message, then:
And as you are wise, make me not
wroth to-day,

Who am but foolish.

Paris. Sir, the queen by me
Wills you to know that from her hus-
band's mouth

She is assured there came here yester-
day

To him her brother, Abbot of St. Cross,
To warn him of some danger.

Bothwell. From his mouth!

Had ever mouth such hunger to eat
dust?

Well, it shall soon be filled and shut.
What else?

Paris. She has taxed hereof her
brother —

Bothwell. What, by word?

Paris. No, but by note she let him
wist she knew it.

Now he denies again his word aloud —

Bothwell. He does the wiselier; there
your tongue struck right;

She has wise men to brethren.

Paris. And desires

To prove it on the accuser's body, being
Once whole again to meet him.

Bothwell. A fair proof:

Doth either sword seek mine for sec-
ond?

Paris. Nay;

But the queen bade me tell you he
should go

To her lord's chamber for his challenge'
sake,

And do that thing ye wot of.

Bothwell. Tell the queen

I will speak to him. We must not mar
our hand;

Say will I see him before the morrow
morn.

Howbeit, it shall be well but for a
night

To put our present purpose back, and
see

If chance or craft will mend our hand
again.

Who strikes most sure strikes deepest.
Say I go

To try this brother's edge; if he be
sure,

He shall well serve us as a glove to
wear

And strike, and have the whiter hands
to show.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE XIX. — DARNLEY'S CHAMBER.

DARNLEY and NELSON.

Darnley. I never had such evil
dreams as now.

Save for the terror of them and after
pain,

I durst well swear I had not slept to-
night.

Nelson. You have slept seven hours.

Darnley. I have been seven years in
hell:

Mine eyes are full yet of the flames, my
flesh

Feels creep the fire upon it; even my
heart

Is as a sere leaf shrunk.

Nelson. Being awake,

Let not it move you.

Darnley. Nay, it shall not move.

Yet were they dreams to shake with
waking fear

A sounder state than mine is.

Nelson. Sir, what dreams?

Darnley. No matter what: I'll tell
thee yet some part,

That thou may'st know I shrink not for
no cause.

I dreamed this bed here was a boat
adrift

Wherein one sat with me who played
and sang,

Yet of his cittern I could hear no note
Nor in what speech he sang inaudibly,

But watched his working fingers and
quick lips

As with a passionate and loathing fear,
And could not speak nor smite him,

and methought
That this was David; and he knew my
heart,

How fain I would have smitten him,
and laughed

As 'twere to mock my helpless hands
and hate.

So drove we toward a rock whereon
 one sat
 Singing, that all the highest air of
 heaven
 Was kindled into light therewith, and
 shone
 As with a double dawn; stare east and
 west
 Lightened with love to hear her, and
 the sky
 Brake in red bloom as leaf-buds break
 in spring,
 But these bore fires for blossoms: then
 a while
 My heart too kindled, and sprang up
 and sang,
 And made sweet music in me, to keep
 time
 With that swift singing; then as fire
 drops down
 Dropped, and was quenched, and in
 joy's stead I felt
 Fear ache in me like hunger; and I
 saw
 These were not stars, nor overhead was
 heaven,
 But a blind vault more thick and gross
 than earth,
 The nether firmament that roofs in
 hell;
 And those hot lights were of lost souls,
 and this
 The sea of tears and fire below the
 world
 That still must wash and cleanse not
 of one curse
 The fair foul strands with all its wander-
 ing brine:
 And as we drove I felt the shallop's
 sides,
 Sapped by the burning water, plank
 from plank
 Severing; and fain I would have cried
 on God,
 But that the rank air took me by the
 throat;
 And ever she that sat on the sea-rock
 Sang, and about her all the reefs were
 white
 With bones of men whose souls were
 turned to fire;
 And if she were or were not what I
 thought,

Meseemed we drew not near enough to
 know;
 For ere we came to split upon that reef
 The sundering planks opened, and
 through their breach
 Swarmed in the dense surf of the dolor-
 ous sea
 With hands that plucked and tongues
 thrust out at us,
 And fastened on me flame-like, that my
 flesh
 Was molten as with earthly fire, and
 dropped
 From naked bone and sinew; but mire
 eyes
 The hot surf scared not, nor put out my
 sense;
 For I beheld and heard out of the
 surge
 Voices that shrieked and heads that
 rose, and knew
 Whose all they were, and whence their
 wrath at me;
 For all these cried upon me that mine
 ears
 Rang, and my brain was like as beaten
 brass,
 Vibrating; and the froth of that foul
 tide
 Was as their spittle shot in my full
 face
 That burnt it; and with breast and
 flanks distent
 I strained myself to curse them back,
 and lacked
 Breath; the sore surge throttled my
 tongueless speech,
 Though its weight buoyed my dipping
 chin, that sank
 No lower than where my lips were
 burnt with brine
 And my throat clenched fast of the
 strangling sea,
 Till I swam short with sick strokes, as
 one might
 Whose hands were maimed. Then mine
 ill spirit of sleep
 Shifted, and showed me as a garden
 walled,
 Wherein I stood naked, a shipwrecked
 man,
 Stunned yet and staggered from the
 sea, and soiled

With all the weed and scurf of the
gross wave
Whose breach had cast me broken on
that shore ;
And one came like a god in woman's
flesh,
And took mine eyes with hers, and gave
me fruit
As red as fire, but full of worms within
That crawled and gendered; and she
gave me wine,
But in the cup a toad was; and she
said,
Eat, and I ate, and *Drink*, and I did
drink,
And sickened; then came one with spur
on heel
Red from his horse o'erridden, smeared
with dust,
And took my hand to lead me as to rest,
Being bruised yet from the sea-breach;
and his hand
Was as of molten iron wherein mine
Was as a brand in fire; and at his feet
The earth split, and I saw within the
gulf
As in clear water mine own writen
face,
Eaten of worms and living; then I
woke.

Nelson. It was a foul and formless
dream, my lord,
With no soul in it.

Darnley. Nay, I think it had not.
And I did mind me, waking, how the
queen
Sang me a song of shipwreck, and
strange seas,
And love adrift by night, and fires burnt
out
That shine but for a song's length: I
did think
It was this singing made up half my
dream.
For there was talk of storms in it, and
stars,
And broken ships, and death that rode
in the air:
So was there in my dream. What step
comes here?

Enter ROBERT STUART.

Robert Stuart. I come to change less
than a word with you,

And take my leave for all your rest of
life.

Darnley. I will not speak alone with
you again:

Stay by me there.

Robert Stuart. Have you not armor
on?

You should not sleep with sword ungirt
on thigh,

Lest one should fall upon you. For
this time

I come indeed to see if you be man,
Or ever knew beyond the naked name
What grace and office should belong to
man

Or purpose to his sword. Reply not
yet:

I know you are sick, weak, pitiful, half
dead,

And with the ingrained infection of
your soul

Its bodily house grown rotten; all you
will;

You cannot swear yourself that piteous
thing

That I will not believe you wretcheder;
No flesh could harbor such a worm
alive

As this thing in you taken for a soul,
And 'scape corruption; but if you shall
live

To stand again afoot and strike one
stroke

For your own hand and head, you shall
fight with me

Or wear the lie writ red upon your face
With my hand's buffet, that you spake
who said

I had given you note of danger from
the queen.

Darnley. Is it a plot, her plot upon
me? Sir,

By God, I never said so: what I said
I have heart and sword to uphold
against all swords,

And kill you if I might as many times
As you shall iterate on me this for true
Which is most false. When I may
stand and go—

Robert Stuart. Yea, then shall we see
fighting. But as now

You can but swear you said not this of
me?

Darnley. I am not bound to swear it
 or unswear
 At any bidding; but so much I will —
 That you may see no hot foul words of
 yours
 Have quenched in me the old thought
 of fellowship —
 As swear again I said but what I might
 With honor and clear heart: I spake
 no word
 To bring you in suspicion, or to turn
 Thwart eyes upon you of men's jeal-
 ousies,
 Or cast you out of favor with the queen;
 I said but you did warn me of my life,
 As being my fast friend still, I thanked
 you for it.
 I know not what she says I said, but
 this
 I know: I spake no treason of you.
 See,
 This is a foolish wind of wrath that
 shakes
 And wrecks your faith in me, mine own
 in you
 Being firm and flawless; what you have
 said, you have said;
 And what I have spoken of you was no
 more
 Than I had right to speak, and rest
 your friend.

Robert Stuart. Will you fight with
 me to maintain so much?

Darnley. If I might rise, I would put
 off my state
 To stand against you equal; you did
 say it,
 That I was even as one the law damns
 dead,
 And she was parcel of my peril.

Robert Stuart. Ay!
 You said so to her?

Darnley. She will not say I did.

Robert Stuart. Plight not your faith
 to that: I am assured
 You said so, and so lied; and this last
 time

I bind you yet to meet me on this cause,
 Or bear the lie about you as a badge.

Darnley. By God, I will grow strong
 to fight with you.

Robert Stuart. If I shall see your
 living face again,

It shall be as mine enemy's; foot to
 foot
 And hand to mortal hand we twain will
 meet,

Or ere the day dawn I shall see you
 dead.

Darnley. I am like to die, then? and
 your warlike words
 Have so much iron in them, and your
 heart

Such daring to provoke one well-nigh
 dead?

I wist your tongue would move more
 tenderly

If I had now my strength of natural
 hand

And body to bear arms: but these shall
 come,

And you change face, and lower your
 look to see.

Robert Stuart. I will abide my peril:
 do you the like,
 You shall do wisely; should I say fare-
 well,

It were to bid you fare not as they do
 Who are of your kind or of your for-
 tune; yet

I bid you, sir, fare better than I think.
 [Exit.]

Darnley. Ay, you think venomously.
 What hour to-day
 Should the queen come?

Nelson. To-night your highness knows
 Her man Sebastian weds a maid of
 hers,

And she makes feast for them in Holy-
 rood

With masque and music; having early
 supped,

She will be here somewhere with certain
 lords

To visit you, and so pass back ere night.

Darnley. She shall not make so
 much, when I am revived,
 Of outland folk and fiddlers, who
 should have

Too much of them by this. I would
 she had come

To see me turn the lie back on his lips.
 I did not answer as I might, being
 whole,

But yet not like a sick man, ha? like
 one

Whose wit and heart lie sick too with
his flesh?

Nelson. Nay, with your natural spirit
of speech you spoke,
With the same heart and tongue you
have in health.

Darnley. I think I did; I would she
had come betimes.

SCENE XX. — THE GARDEN BEHIND
KIRK OF FIELD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HAY.

Bothwell. Did I not bid them spare
no speed? the devil
I think has maimed their feet in my
despite,
To keep a knave so piteous out of hell.
By God, it will be moonrise ere they
come.

Ormiston. Tush, man! the night is
close.

Bothwell. Ay, close and safe
As is the lock of a girl's maidenhood
When the gold key turns in it. They
halt like jades;
God plague their laggard limbs with
goads of fire!
Must they fall spavined now?

Hay. Here come they three,
And with charged hands; be not so
outward hot,
But as their charge is ere we give it
fire.

Bothwell. Teach your own tongue to
take your tune, not mine.

Enter HEPBURN with Servants.
Have you some devil's cramp in your
bones, to crawl
At this worm's race? Set down your
load, and go.

[*Exeunt Servants.*]

What lamed these knaves' feet or be-
lated you,
To hold us here thus till the moon
were up?

Hepburn. 'Tis not yet risen; and
your own word it was
Withheld us till the west should cast
off red.

Bothwell. Well, we have time. Ye
three are hands enough

To bear this down, and strew it within
the vault,
While I go help the queen here bide
her hour

Till you send Paris to me for a sign.
Take heed there be no noise. Let but
two stay

To fire the train; you, cousin, for my love
Shall be one hand thereto. Pass in,
and see

Ye go down sure and softly. From
this gate

Ye know the passage under; go, and
speed.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XXI. — DARNLEY'S CHAMBER.

*The QUEEN, DARNLEY, Earls of CASSI-
LIS, HUNTLEY, and ARGYLE.*

Queen. But I must chide you for one
thing, my lord,
That you would hold your servant
Duram here
Though it be for love you bear him;
he is sick,
And should not sleep nor watch with
you to-night.

You do not well to keep him from the
town
Against his health, who should take
physic there,
And come back whole to serve you.

Darnley. Let him go.
I did but bid him leave me not alone;
I will have one for service at my hand.

Queen. Have you no more but just
this young man gone
Whom I bade go even where was best
for him?

Let your page lie at hand here.

Darnley. Nay, I will.
You sent off Alexander?

Queen. He was sick;
We should show care of them we take
to grace

More friendlke than by cherishing our-
selves
With their forced company; the grace
is more

To take thought for them whom we
hold in trust

Than still to exact their service, tax
their faith,
Whose faith and service we that lean
thereon
Should put to no more toil and pain
than needs,
Requiting love with labor.

Darnley. You say well:
But what should ail him? save that
yesterday

He found his bed-straw here by chance
afire,

And flung it out at window; on which
plea

He would not lie to-night here, till I
bade him

Sleep with me as aforetime, being of
all

The man bound closest to my love and
trust;

Then first he spake of sickness, as you
heard

Who sat between us. Nay, but let
him go;

The boy shall serve to sleep here.

Queen. Sickness makes
All wills to serve it like necessity:

Witness my will to keep my brother
here

Whom his wife's sickness at St. An-
drew's now

Parts from our feasts and counsels,
caught up hence

As if a wind had rapt him.

Darnley. She is sick too, —

The lady Murray?

Queen. Nigh to death, he says;

I know not: who knows how near
death he walks

Who treads as now most upright in the
sun?

Argyle. Why have we death and
sickness in our mouths,

Who come forth of a feast not ended
yet

That in good time recalls us?

Queen. Presently.

I would you were in health to dance
me down

To-night but for the bride's sake; for
the groom,

He may live easier that you grace him
not,

Nor gall with favor or with jealousy.

Darnley. We twain shall see this
night out otherwise.

Queen. I am sure you shall see more
of rest than I.

Darnley. Except I watch for sick-
ness' sake all night.

Queen. That shall you not; I charge
you on my love

Sleep sound for my sake.

Enter BOTHWELL.

Are not you the bell
That strikes the hour to sunder us, my
lord?

Bothwell. Madam, I strike not yet.

Queen. The better: sit,

And make no sound of parting till your
hour,

No timeless note of severance. My
fair lord,

Have you no fair word for your noble
guests?

Darnley. I pray you, sirs, of your
own gentleness.

Lay it not to my discourtesy for shame
That I can but thus sickly entertain

The grace ye do me; that I meet it so,
Impute not to my will that is myself,

But to my weakness that is none of me
Save as our enemy may be part of us,

And so forgive it.

Huntley. Sir, we are fain to see,
Even in your gracious words that speak
you ill,

Some spirit of health already.

Cassilis. I would pledge

My name and word you shall not long
lie sick,

Who bear yourself thus lordlike.

[*Noise heard.*]

Queen. Ah! my heart —

It wrings me here in passing; pardon
me.

Bothwell. God's lightning burn them!
will they mar me now?

[*Aside, and exit.*]

Darnley. Heard you no noise?

Argyle. Where?

Queen. Some one stirred below;

A chair thrown down or such-like.

Darnley. Nay, I caught

A rush and rattle as —

Cassilis. Of pebble-stones?

Darnley. Where is my lord gone forth?

Queen. Why are you moved?

Darnley. I am not moved: I am no fearful fool

To shake and whiten as a winter tree
With no more wind than this is.

Queen. Do you think

It is your counsellor come back in wrath

To warn again and threaten?

Darnley. Nay, for him

I think he hath learnt a lesson of my rede

To vex his soul and trouble me no more.

Re-enter BOTHWELL.

Queen. What deadly news now of what danger, sir?

Bothwell. Some fellow bearing fagots for the fire

Slipt at the threshold: I have admonished him

What din his knaveship made even in our ears

As if he had the devil there in his hands.

Queen (aside). It was of them?

Bothwell (aside). Ay, hell take hold on them!

It was their din, God thank them for it with fire,

Our careful helpers; but I have made them safe:

The train is well-nigh laid now: what remains

To strew, I have charged them shed without more sound

Than where the snow strikes.

Darnley. Must you part indeed?

Queen. They look for us ere long.

Darnley. Now know I not

What I would give to hold you here a night:

Even half my life, I think, and know not why.

Queen. That were too much. I slept here yesterday;

Were you the better for me?

Darnley. Ay, and no;

I deemed I was the better till I slept, And then —

Queen. Why, did my being here break your sleep?

It shall not break to-night then.

Enter PARIS, and stands at the door.

Bothwell (aside to ARGYLE). Time is come;

Touch him, and give the sign.

Darnley. The air turns sharp;

There came a wind as chill as from the pit.

Why do you fix your eyes so fast on me?

Queen. Not out of mind to mar your sleep again.

Darnley. I will not sleep alone.

Queen. Ay, will you not?

The town looks like a smoke whose flame is out,

Deformed of night, defaced and featureless,

Dull as the dead fume of a fallen fire.

There starts out of the cloud a climbing star,

And there is caught and slain.

Darnley. Why gaze you so?

Queen. I looked to see if there should rise again

Out of its timeless grave the mounting light

That so was overtaken. We must part;

Keep with this kiss this ring again for me

Till I shall ask it of you; and good night.

Darnley. A good night it may be to folk that feast;

I see not how it shall be good to me.

Queen. It may be better. I must be some hour

Again among the masquers: you that sleep

Shall hear no noise and see no company.

Enter NELSON.

For this one night here comes your chamberlain:

Good rest with you. 'Twas just this time last year

David was slain.

Darnley. Why tell you me of that?

Queen. This very time as now. Good night, my lord.

[*Exeunt all but DARNLEY and NELSON*

Darnley. What folk remain by me?

Nelson. Sir, four of us:

Myself and Seymour, Taylor and his boy.

Darnley. Let Taylor sleep here in my room to-night,

You three in the south gallery.

Nelson. Well, my lord.

Darnley. I am left here very lonely.

She was kind,

Most kind she was; but what should make her speak

Of David's slaying?

Nelson. A word that shot by chance;
A shaft of thought that grazed her and flew by.

Darnley. Why should she tell me of it? My heart runs low;

As if my blood beat out of tune with life,

I feel the veins shuddering shrink in, and all

My body seems a burden to my soul.

Come, I will think not that way.

Re-enter PARIS.

Paris. Sir, the queen,
Having forgot for haste in parting hence
Her outer cloak of fur, hath sent me for it,

Lest this night's weather strike her blood a-cold.

Darnley. Take it, and go.

[Exit PARIS.]

I do not like their eyes,
These foreign folk's that serve her. Is it cold?

I feel cold here.

Nelson. A fair sharp night, my lord;
And the air less cumbered than it was with cloud.

Darnley. I find no night of all nights fair to me:

I am sick here at my heart all the dark hours.

Give me the book there. Ay, my book of psalms?

What day is this?

Nelson. The ninth of February.

Darnley. How says it of God's foes, they were afraid

Where no fear was? That am not I: my fear

Dies without food. I am not as were these.

I prithee tell me, of thine honest heart,

Think'st thou I have no cause to feed my fear,

Or keep the bitter life in it alive?

Nelson. I know not, sir; but what you give it of food

Is so much taken from your health of heart

That goes to starve your spirit of like-ly life.

Darnley. Why, then I will not feed it with false thoughts.

Call here my chamber-fellow. If the heart

Enter TAYLOR.

Be but the servant of chance cold and heat,

And the brain bear not rule upon the blood,

We are beasts who call us men.
Thomas, good night.

[Exit NELSON.]

What, shall we watch a while?

Taylor. So please your grace.

Darnley. I have more mind to sleep than power to sleep:

Some unrest in me fights against my rest.

Come hither, Will. Of all thy fellows here,

I think thou lov'st me; fain am I to think.

I would not live unloved of all men born;

I hope I shall not. Dost thou feel to-night

Thy living blood and spirit at ease in thee?

Taylor. Surely, my lord.

Darnley. I would thy lord did too.

This is a bitter writing where he saith
How in his prayer he mourns, and hath his heart

Disquieted within him; and again,
The fear of death is fallen upon him,

see,
And fearfulness and trembling, as is writ,

Are come upon him, and an horrible dread

Hath him o'erwhelmed: Oh that I had, saith he,

Wings like a dove! then would I flee

away,

And be at rest; would get me then far
 off,
 And bide within the wilderness, it
 saith;
 I would make haste to escape. Lo, here
 am I,
 That bide as in a wilderness indeed,
 And have not wings to bear me forth
 of fear.
 Nor is it an open enemy, he saith,
 Hath done me this dishonor (what hath
 put
 This deadly scripture in mine eye to-
 night?)
 For then I could have borne it; but it
 was
 Even thou, mine own familiar friend,
 with whom
 I took sweet counsel; in the house of
 God
 We walked as friends. Ay, in God's
 house it was
 That we joined hands, even she my wife
 and I,
 Who took but now sweet counsel mouth
 to mouth,
 And kissed as friends together.
 Wouldst thou think,
 She set this ring at parting on my
 hand
 And to my lips her lips? and then she
 spake
 Words of that last year's slaughter. O
 God, God!
 I know not if it be not of thy will
 My heart begins to pass into her
 heart,
 Mine eye to read within her eye, and
 find
 Therein a deadlier scripture. Must it
 be
 That I so late should waken, and so
 young
 Die? for I wake as out of sleep to
 death.
 Is there no hand or heart on earth to
 help?
 Mother! my mother! hast thou heart
 nor hand
 To save thy son, to take me hence
 away
 Far off, and hide me? But I was thy
 son,

That lay between thy breasts and drank
 of thee,
 And I thy son it is they seek to slay.
 My God, my God! how shall they mur-
 der me?
Taylor. I pray you, comfort your own
 heart, my lord:
 Your passion drives your manhood out
 of you.
Darnley. I know it doth: I am hare-
 hearted, for
 The hunters are upon me. There —
 and there —
 I hear them questing. I shall die, man,
 — die,
 And never see the sun more; ay, this
 hour
 Will they come in and slay me. O
 great God,
 Sweet Jesus! will you have me die this
 death,
 Such death as never man before has
 died?
 See how they will not let me pray to
 you,
 To take my soul out of their fangs and
 hell!
 Will you not make the sun rise for my
 sake,
 That I may see you in the dawn, and
 live,
 And know the grace that God hath ere
 I die?
Taylor. Sir, for God's love —
Darnley. I say I hear their feet.
 Thou hast no ears — God hath no ears
 for me,
 Nor eyes to look upon me; hands he
 hath, —
 Their bloody hands to smite with, and
 her heart
 Is his toward me to slay me. Let them
 come.
 How do men die? but I so trapped
 alive, —
 Oh, I shall die a dog's death and no
 man's.
 Mary, by Christ whose mother's was
 your name,
 Slay me not! God, turn off from me
 that heart, —
 Out of her hands, God, God, deliver
 me!

ACT III.—JANE GORDON.

Time: from February 10 to June 11, 1567.

SCENE I.—BOTHWELL'S APARTMENT
IN HOLYROOD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HEPBURN OF
BOLTON, and other Gentlemen.

Bothwell. Is my knave sent for to me
from the queen?

Hepburn. Ay, my good lord.

Bothwell. I had happier thoughts of
him,

Who served us but unhappily last night:
This Paris had been faithful, and his
tongue,

That might have struck a sting into my
fame,

Had done me loyal service, and let fly
No word to bring me in disgrace of men
When I stood friendless; for which
cause ye know

I gave him place with the queen's
chamberlains

And promise of more furtherance; but
this thing

Has turned his six years' service into
dust,

And made his faith as running water
slip

Between my hands that held it for a
staff;

For, since I first brake with him of the
deed,

He hath been for fear besotted like
a beast.

Ormiston. 'Faith, he was heavy
enough of cheer last night

When you came forth, and the queen
parted thence

And nither to the bridal.

Bothwell. By this hand,

I came upon him glooming and with-
drawn

Up in a nook with face as of one
hanged,

And asked what ailed him to put on
that gloom

Or make such countenance there before
the queen?

And I would handle him in such sort, I
said,

As he was never in his life,—'by God,
I had the mind to do it,—and he, *My
lord,*

I care not what thing now ye do to me,
And craved he might get thence to bed,
as sick,

But that I would not: then, as ye twain
saw,

When came the wind and thunder of
the blast

That blew the fool forth who took wing
for death,

Down my knave drops me flatlong, with
his hair

Aghast as hedgehogs' prickles, and,
Alas,

My lord! what thing is this? and *He
had seen*

*Great enterprises, marry, and many of
them,*

*But never one that scared him so at
this;*

*And such a thing would never have good
end,*

And I should see it. By God, I had a
will

To have set my dagger here into him,
but yet

I drew it not forth.

Ormiston. I doubt you did not well:
'Tis of such stuff that time makes tale-
bearers.

Bothwell. I would not strike him for
old service' sake,

Were he more dangerous to me; but,
God help,

What hurt here can he do us? I tell
you, sirs,

I think my star that was not swift to
rise,

But hung this long time strangled in
dead cloud,

Is even by this a fire in heaven, and
hath

The heat and light in it of this dead
man's

That it hath drunk up as a dewdrop
drawn

Into the red mid-heat of its own heart
And ye that walk by light of it shall
stand

With morning on the footless mountain-tops
Crowned.

Hepburn. There are crags yet slippery to be clomb,
And scaurs to rend their knees and feet
who rise.

Bothwell. I have my hand here on
the throat of time,
And hold mine hour of fortune by the
hair.

Had I let slip this season, I had fallen
Naked and sheer to break myself on
death,

A cragsman crushed at the cliff's foot;
but now

Chance cannot trip me, if I look not
down

And let mine eye swim back among
slain fears

To reckon up dead dangers; but I
look

High up as is the light, higher than
your eyes,

Beyond all eagles' aeries, to the sun.

Ormiston. You will be king?

Bothwell. Was I not crowned last
night?

The hand that gave those dead stones
wings to fly

Gave wings too to my fortune, and the
fire

That sprang then in our faces, on my
head

Was as the gold forefigured on a king's.

Enter PARIS.

What says the queen? why shak'st thou
like a cur?

Speak, beast, or beastlike shalt thou
fare with me:

Has thou not seen her?

Paris. Ay, my lord.

Bothwell. Ay, dog?

What said she to those gaping eyes of
thine?

Paris. My lord, I found her in her
mourning bed

New-hung with black; her looks were
fresh and staid:

Her fast being broken only with an
egg,

Ere she addressed herself again to
sleep

She spake but three words with me of
yourself,

How might you fare, and when she rose
by noon

You should come to her: no more.

Bothwell. So let her sleep;

There are that watch for her. For
thine own part,

I charge thee, tell me one thing: in thy
life

Didst thou pledge ever promise, or
plight faith,

To that dead mask of kingship?

Paris. Nay, my lord.

Bothwell. Seest thou not now these
gentlemen my friends?

Not one of them but for troth's sake to
me

And loving service hath cast all things
off

To do as I shall and to fare as I;

And if thou think'st, whom no faith
bound nor love

To serve that fool, or come 'twixt hell
and him

To buckler him from burning,—if thou
think'st,

That art my servant, thou hast sinned
toward God

In our offence, this lies not to thy
charge,

But mine who caused thee do it, and
all the lords'

Who with me took this work in all
their hands.

And if now thou have will to go thy
way,

Thou shalt depart right soon with re-
compense;

But for all pains that can be put to thee
Thou must not take this on thy tongue
again.

Paris. My lord, I will not.

Bothwell. Sirs, with me it rests

To take some order for the burial soon.
When the queen's eye hath dwelt upon
him dead,—

As shall be, lest men say for shame or
fear

She would not see him,—then with all
privy speed

He shall by night be given here to the
worms.

His raiment and his horses will I take
 By the queen's gift; for, being now
 highest in place,
 I will present me kinglike to the time,
 And come before men royal, who shall
 know
 I stand here where he stood in all their
 sight;
 So, seeing at once if I be lord or no,
 He that shall hate me risen shall need
 take heart
 To strike betimes, or strike not. At
 this hour
 Bold heart, swift hand, are wiser than
 wise brain.
 I must be seen of all men's fear or hate,
 And as I am seen must see them, and
 smite down,
 Or lie forever naked underfoot
 Down in the dark for them to triumph
 on.
 That will I not; but who shall over-
 throw
 Must kill me kingly, sworded hand to
 hand,
 Not snared with gin or lime-twigg as a
 fool,
 Nor hurled by night up howling into
 heaven,
 But in the sun's eye weaponed. Some
 of you
 Go forth, and find what noise is in the
 streets,
 What rumors, and how tempered, on
 men's tongues:
 When I pass out among them, I will
 take
 Some fifty with me to my guard, and
 ride
 As might their king ride. Be it pro-
 claimed abroad,
 In mine own name and Maitland's and
 Argyle's,
 Two thousand pounds shall pay that
 good man's pains
 Who shall produce the murderers of
 our king
 For just and sudden judgment. In few
 days,
 If Mar be not mine unfriend and his
 own,
 Who holds the keys of Stirling, we
 shall pass

With some of counsel thither, and
 there bide
 Till the first reek of rumor have blown
 by,
 Then call in spring our parliament
 again.
Hetbarn. Your heart of hope is
 great: with God to friend,
 A man could speed no better than your
 hope.
Bothwell. I tell thee, God is in that
 man's right hand
 Whose heart knows when to strike and
 when to stay.
 I swear I would not ask more hope
 of heaven
 Than of mine own heart which puts fire
 to me,
 And of mine own eye which discerns
 my day.
 And, seeing the hope wherein I go now
 forth
 Is of their giving, if I live or die,
 With God to friend or unfriend, quick
 or dead
 I shall not wake nor sleep with them
 that fear,
 Whose lives are as leaves wavering in
 a wind,
 But as a man foiled or a man en-
 throned
 That was not fooled of fortune nor of
 fear. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II. — ANOTHER ROOM IN THE
 SAME.

*The body of DARNLEY lying on a bier.
 Two men in attendance.*

First Attendant. There is no wound.

Second Attendant. Nor hath the fire
 caught here;

This gown about him is not singed; his
 face

Is clinched together, but on hair nor
 cheek

Has flame laid even a finger; each limb
 whole,

And nothing of him shattered but the
 life.

How comes he dead?

First Attendant. Tush, tush! he died
 by chance.

Take thou no pain to know it. For
mine own mind,
I think it was his sickness which being
full
Broke as a plague-spot breaks, and
shattered him,
And, with his fleshly house, the house
of stone
Which held him dying: his malady it
was
That burst the walls in sunder, and sent
up

A ruin of flaming roofs and floors afire.

Second Attendant. Was not his chamber-fellow's corpse as his?

First Attendant. Ay, woundless as
they say, and unconsumed;
I know not surely. But the blast that
made

The good town ring and rock here
through her streets
Shook not all sleepers in the house to
death:

Three souls have crept forth of the
wreck alive

That slept without his chamber.

Second Attendant. What say these?

First Attendant. What should they
say, with thanks for their own
hap,

But that this chance is dire, and this
man dead?

There is no more yet for sage lips to
say,

That would not timeless be stopped up
with earth.

Enter the QUEEN and BOTHWELL.

Queen. Leave us, and after take your
charge again.

First Attendant. We must forbear her
till her moan be made. (*Aside.*)

[*Exeunt Attendants.*]

Queen. Let me look on him. It is
marred not much;

This was a fair face of a boy's alive.

Bothwell. It had been better had he
died ere man.

Queen. That hardly was he yesterday. A man!

What heart, what brain of manhood
had God sown

In this poor fair fool's flesh to bear him
fruit?

What seed of spirit or counsel? what
good hope

That might have put forth flower in
any sun?

We have plucked none up who cut him
off at root,

But a tare only or a thorn. His cheek
Is not much changed, though since I

wedded him

His eyes had shrunken and his lips
grown wan

With sickness and ill living. Yesterday,

Man or no man, this was a living soul;
What is this now? This tongue that

mourned to me,
These lips that mine were mixed with,

these blind eyes

That fastened on me following, these
void hands

That never plighted faith with man and
kept,

Poor hands that paddled in the sloughs
of shame,

Poor lips athirst for women's lips and
wine,

Poor tongue that lied, poor eyes that
looked askant

And had no heart to face men's wrath
or love

As who could answer either,—what
work now

Doth that poor spirit which moved
them? To what use

Of evil or good should hell put this or
heaven,

Or with what fire of purgatory annealed
Shall it be clean and strong, yet keep

in it

One grain for witness of what seed it
was,

One thread, one shred inwoven with it
alive,

To show what stuff time spun it of,
and rent?

I have more pity such things should be
born

Than of his death; yea, more than I
had hate,

Living, of him.

Bothwell. Since hate nor pity now
Or helps or hurts him, were we not
as wise

To take but counsel for the day's work
here,
And put thought of him with him
underground?

Queen. I do but cast once more away
on him

The last thought he will ever have of
mine.

You should now love me well.

Bothwell. Ay should I, sweet.

Queen. I think you shall: it were
more hard than death,

You should not love me.

Bothwell. Nay, not possible.

Queen. I think God never set in flesh
of man

Such heart as yours would be, to love
me not,

Bothwell. Will you give order for his
funeral?

Queen. Ay.

But if you loved not—I would know
that now,

That I might die even this day, and my
hands

Shed no more blood nor strive more
for your sake;

For if I live, whose life is of your
love,

I shall take on them more of toil and
blood,

To stain and tire them laboring all
their life.

I would not die bloodguiltier than is
need,

With redder hands than these and
wearer heart,

And have no love to cleanse and com-
fort them.

For this man, I forgive him.

Bothwell. For which fault?

Queen. That he touched ever and de-
filed my life

With life of his and death. I am fain
to know

You do not love me for his sake the
less

Who so have soiled me with him.

Bothwell. Shall I not

Swear it, with him for sponsor to mine
oath?

Queen. Kiss me before his face here
for a sign.

Bothwell. You have strange doubts
and dreams.

Queen. I will not have.

When part we hence, and whither?

Bothwell. I have word

Your careful warden, the grave lord of
Mar,

Will hardly give my followers at your
prayer

Place to come in to Stirling at our back.
Here now the streets begin to sound

and swarm

So that my guard is now for more than
pride;

Wherefore I hold it well we take with us
Some friends of our own counsel, as

Argyle,

Huntley, my brother-in-law that shall
be none,

With Maitland and the archbishop,
and set forth

To the lord Seyton's, who shall give us
house

Till this loud world fall stiller than it is.

Queen. Be it where you will, and
how: do you but lead,

Would I not follow naked through the
world?

For him of whose dead face mine eyes
take leave

As my free soul of shameful thought
on him,

Let him have private burial some fit
night

By David whom he slew. I mind me now
'Tis not a year since I fled forth with him

Even through the graves where he shall
lie alone,

And passing through their dusty deadly
ways

For some few minutes of the rustling
night

I felt his hand quake: he will quake
not now

To sleep there all night long. See you
to that. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—SEYTON CASTLE.

LORD HERRIES and SIR JAMES MEL-
VILLE.

Herries. So stands it, sir: she hath
put into his hands,

Besides the lordship of the port of
 Leith,
 The castle's government of Edinburgh,
 Of Inchkeith and Blackness, three
 master keys
 That keep the doors o' the kingdom.
 In Dunbar
 He sits now lord, and gathers men to
 hold
 By her next gift Dumbarton: while she
 sends
 A privy message for a priest to plead
 With the French king,—that by his
 mother's mouth
 And his own hand hath warned her, if
 her lord
 Sleep unrevenged, she being so shamed
 henceforth
 Must hold them for her enemies, and
 put off
 All thought to flee for fear into their
 guard
 From peril of her subjects,—even to
 him
 She sends for payment of her dower
 foregone
 Wherewith to levy hireling bands in
 France
 With but her babe for captain called,
 and be
 Fenced round at least with all of these
 she may,
 Of whose despatch none here must
 know before,
 Nor, if these fail her, of her frustrate
 aim;
 Then, ere her mourning month be here
 played out
 With hound and horn and soldierlike
 delights
 To recreate her natural heart and life,
 She must repass to Holyrood, and meet
 The ambassador from England, Kill-
 grew,
 Who comes to find folk sorrowing and
 in fear
 With counsel for our peril and our
 grief,
 And falls upon us feasting; and to him
 She plights her faith that by this par-
 liament
 Shall Bothwell have his trial, and the
 cause

Be sifted clear in the eyes of all good
 men;
 Wherewith content he parts, or discon-
 tent,
 I know not, but is gone; and she come
 back
 Takes heed no more than of a harp
 unstrung
 What plaint or plea, what charge or
 menace, comes
 From her lord's father, but to his de-
 mand
 For convocation of the nobles made
 Returns her word their house shall
 meet in spring,
 And puts his charge by lightly as she
 may.
 Of all this, nothing, in my mind, goes
 well.
Melville. Nor aught in mine. Your
 fellows of her faith
 Who stand as yet in England on her
 side
 Will fall off from her, hearing what
 I doubt
 All ears will hear too soon: I have
 shown it her
 By letter sent me from a faithful Scot
 That long hath wrought among them
 on her part,
 And freely thence wrote all his fear for
 me
 To lay before her, and his grief to
 hear
 Such bruit of her intent as could but
 slay
 The opinion of her judgment, who must
 lose,
 By such design, God's favor and her
 fame,
 And in each kingdom that should kiss
 her hand
 Each man's heart born her heritage,
 and miss
 The noble mark she shot at. I, adjured
 Of him that wrote to bring this in her
 eye,
 Gave her to read it, which she gave
 again,
 Silent; then came the secretary to me
 A short while thence, and took me by
 the hand,
 Desiring me as by the queen's desire

To let him see it, who had given him
late to know
I had shown her a strange letter, and
devised
By mine own counsel for Lord Both-
well's wreck;
And having read, What thing was in
my mind,
He said, to do this, which being known
to the earl,
As shortly there was need to fear it
should,
Would cause him surely seek my life?
And I,
It was a sore thing for true men to
see
So good a princess run on utter wreck,
And no man be so far concerned in her
As to forewarn of peril. He replied,
As one who had newly left her wroth,
I had done
More honestly than wisely; bade me
fly
Ere the earl came up from dining; and
being flown
I know he sought to slay me, who lay
hid
Till his main rage was slackened; and
the queen,
Who had made him swear to seek no
scathe of mine,
When at their meeting next she showed
it him,
Chid him as who would cause her to be
left
Of all her servants: then he swore
anew
I should receive no harm; whereof
again
Being advertised I spake with her, and
showed
She had never done me so much wrong
as this,
To make the letter a device of mine
Which came even whence I had given
her word; and yet
Had it not come, I had held me bound
to speak
Freely, with reverence and humility,
My thought as did that letter, being
of mind
At one therewith. But she would give
no ear:

Nor is there force in counsel or man's
wit
To avert this ill she binds upon herself,
Who breaks the bonds in twain that
hold her friends,
And fetters her own feet with gyves of
steel,
When she hath need of them to stand
or flee
Before the face of peril multiform
That lightens on us flame-like: you, my
lord,
Whose love she hath proven, are not
of me to learn
The immediate feature of it.
Herries. Alas! not I:
I have taken too much note thereof,
and stand
Too near its fangs to live of them un-
scathed,
Except I make haste hence.
Melville. What haste, my lord?
Herries. I have spoken with her of
their purpose blown
From lip to lip already on men's breath,
To loose the bonds that bind her lover
yet
By witness of the lady of Buccleuch,
Who shall proclaim herself his para-
mour
And pre-contracted to him by promise-
plight
To prove his wife no lawful wife, but
bound,
Will she or no, and love him not or
love,
To sue divorce from him; if all this fail,
Then by remonstrance of their kindred
blood
Found some four cousinships away, this
bond
Shall melt or break that parts him from
the queen.
Melville. Why, ere his marriage with
the Lady Jane,
She had her dispensation from the
Pope,
For the blood mixed between them, of
all bars
Which might have maimed it with im-
pediment.
Herries. So had she, but they think
to cover it

As with a veil of invalidity
 Pretexted for pretence, or with dumb
 show

Darkly disclaimed: this shall not cum-
 ber them;

And they will buy compliance and
 good-will

Of Huntley to his sister's putting off
 By restoration of his forfeit lands.

Melville. All tongues i' the land will
 as one mouth of fire

Cry death and shame against it.

Herries. So said I.

Melville. So said you to her?

Herries. I said so; whereat she,
 As 'twere half smiling in a wondering
 shame,

Half mourning to be guiltlessly mis-
 judged,

With fervent eyes' fall and with scorn-
 ful lips

Protests me, never had she thought of it.
 Wherefore I hold it ill to tarry here.

Melville. Your wisdom shall do well
 to spare no speed,

But get it gone from eyeshot of them
 both.

Herries. I know it; yet would I plead
 again with her,

For pity and honor of the imperilled
 state,

That should be shaken with her fall to
 death,

And the crown shattered into shards of
 gold.

For as a wolf anhungered and awaked,
 That long hath slept and starved, with
 foodless dreams

Assuaging its blunt fangs through blood-
 less hours,

The common people, that in dumb dim
 rest,

With heartless hopes assuaging its blind
 heart,

Hath fed for ages on itself asleep,
 Shows now the keen teeth and the

kindled eyes

Of ravening heads innumerable, that
 gape

And glare about the wide ways of the
 world,

Seeking their meat of God; and if he

fail,

Then of the devil that burns in minds
 of men

Rebellious, whom their heat of heart
 eats up

Till the fire fasten on authority

To lay red hands of ruin on all state,
 And leave in ashes empire; as of late

This Ket in England, and his like that
 swarm

At heel of the new creeds in Lutheran
 lands

To pluck the sun out of the heaven
 of rule,

And leave men dark and kingless.
 Hath not Knox

Struck with his fangs of speech on
 monarchy

No less than on the Church that first
 was stung,

Preaching for all men knowledge
 equally

And prostitute and perilous freedom
 shared

With all blear eyes, brute mouths, and
 unwashed hands,

That lust for change, and take all fires
 for light,

Except the sun's wherein their fathers
 walked?

And shall not these at any breach break
 in

That flaws the sea-wall which forbade
 their sea

To drown all banks that bound it?
 She will make

Of all that lived in Scotland hers and
 ours

A ruin and republic of strewn wrecks,
 Ranks rent, bonds broken, all things

orderless,
 A commonwealth of dead men's bones

and dung,
 Dust, mire, and blood, and one red

rank of beasts

That rage and revel in equality.
Melville. 'Tis true, the commons are

as waters chafed

Since this wind blew amongst them:
 wave by wave

It lifts their heads up, and the murmur-
 ing air

Breathes hard and blackens with the
 blast of change.

Herries. And were none touched
with danger but herself,
This yet were pity enough for tears of
blood,

So fair she is, and less by place than
kind

Royal, so high and so assured of spirit,
So full of all things all men love or
fear,

Heart's light and fire, a soul born
winged, with eyes

That mate the sun's eye and the light-
ning's; yea,

It were past count of pity, past men's
thought,

That she should fall for love's light
sake self-slain.

Melville. There were one way to
serve her that would be
Most thankless, being thankworthiest;
but none else.

Herries. That were no way for feet
that would not walk

Red as her enemies' did, whose passage
shook

With its near sound her life and fame;
such ways

Let Morton take, or Maitland's weap-
oned wit,

Whose words are swords.

Melville. It may be so they will.

Herries. Death?

Melville. Nay, who knows when death
may come?

Herries. Why, they

Who strike the spur into his fleshless
side,

Who prick him forward with their craft
for goad,

Or put for sword their hatred in his
hand.

They have done deeds of deadlier
policy

Than make submissive show toward
Bothwell here,

Then snare and slay him, or put the
queen in ward:

Would they do this, they might be ser-
viceable

But perilous must be, putting hand to
work

That treads nigh treason though for
loyalty.

Melville. Whose may know their
mind, it is not I.

Herries. She hath sent for Murray
hither; in his eye

We may take note which way their fac-
tion looks.

If yet toward violence and red-handed
craft,

This mood of hers will strip her for
their strokes

Naked, and leave us handless that
would fight

On her just side against them. God
mend all!

*Enter the QUEEN, BOTHWELL, SEYTON,
the MARIES, and Attendants.*

Queen. The wind has moved my blood
like wine; I am full

Even to the heart's root of its spirit of
life.

Flew not my hawk the last flight well,
that sent

The tumbling hern down from her high-
est? I think

You have none better. Is our brother
come?

Seyton. He is now alighting, madam.

Queen. By this hand,

I would when we must 'light from horse
we might

Take wing instead, and so what time
we live

Live ever at glad speed save when we
sleep!

It points and edges the dull steel of life,
To feel the blood and brain in us renew

By help of that life lifting us, and speed
That being not ours is mixed with us

and serves.

I would hold council, and wage war, and
reign,

Not in walled chambers nor close pens
of state,

But or in saddle or at sea, my steed
As a sea-wave beneath the wind and me,

Or the sea serving as a bitted steed
That springs like air and fire. Time

comes, they say,
When we love rest, house-keeping sloth,
and calms:

To me I think it will not come alive.

Herries. Madam, I would change yet
one word with you

Ere I go hence, or others take your ear.

Queen. So shall you, sir; yet is my heart too light,
And its live blood too merry from the chase,

And all my life too full of the air of joy
Whereon it mounts up falcon-like for prey,

And hovers at its wings' width ere it strike,

To give wise words wise welcome: yet what grace

I may to your grave counsels will I show
And modesty of audience. — Tell my brother

I shortly will receive him. [*Exeunt all but the QUEEN and HERRIES.*]

My good lord,

It is for that old honor and true love
I bear your high name and your flawless faith

That yet mine ear makes way now for your words,

In trust they will not wound it for its pains

With any tuneless or intemperate breath.

Heries. Had I no heart, or in the heart I have

No love to serve you, madam, and no faith,

I had parted hence without more toil of tongue

Or strife of speech unpalatable and harsh

In ears made wide for music; but in me
Is heart enough to burn with fire of pain,

If not to lighten with that fire their eyes
For whose sake it consumes me, when I see

Danger and death masked as true men
and bold

Attend about them with sheathed knives
in hand

And shut mouths as of serpents. Let me not

Incense again your flame of spirit and scorn

With faint and void reiteration of dead words

That spent in vain their spirit before:
I speak

Not now so much to move you as would God

I had the might to move, but of myself
Rather to save my soul of faith alive,
And my deep heart of duty toward your grace,

By speech though fruitless, and by love
though lost,

That will not pass forth silent, and give way

To loud-tongued ruin that shall speak
too high

For ears to close against it. Queen of Scots,

Lady that have the loftiest life in hand
Even yet that ever was of queen on earth, —

Last hope of men that hope through you in God,

Last comfort of his Church, light of his lamp

That men have nigh blown out with blasts of night, —

O you to whose fair face and hand uplift
The treble-kingdom islands should turn back

Out of the shadow of storm to follow them,

And in the shadow of faith instead lie down

Beneath the wings that covered your crowned head,

Even hers that brood above her fold
and yours,

The Church your mother's, that by no hand else

Looks yet to gather three lands in and save, —

Who have the heart and the eye and the hour for this

Which to none other God may give again

So as you have them, — you that should be writ

In all the royal records of the world
Savior, the light and the right hand of God

Shown in a woman, to bring back and build

What was blown down or shed as dust
on the air, —

You that have spirit and mind to apprehend,

And to that apprehension put swift
hand,
Nor slow of soul nor fearful, — you, our
queen,
And England's heir, that should make
higher on earth
The name of Scot than any star in
heaven,
And on the cleft growth of two thorny
stems
Bid one rose flower of Catholic royalty
Not to be plucked or trampled, — Oh,
will you,
So great, so fair and fearless as you are,
That were you no queen, or such other
one
As no such high cause calls on, you
would seem
Not less a thing made to heroic end,
A creature crowned and armed by God
to bear
His witness to his work, and in man's
eye
Stand signal-wise lighting the beaconed
sea, —
Will you put all this as a garment off,
And change it like a vesture? By your
life
Which is the life of this land's majesty,
And your high soul which is our spirit
of hope,
Slay not all these: help them that trust
in you;
Help God, lest we believe him for your
sake
Ill-minded toward us for our sin, to
turn
This empire to a populous wilderness,
A riotous desert where things vile are
crowned,
And high made low, and low things set
on high,
And rule trod under with foul feet and
bare,
And kingdom parcelled by hard hands
and red.
Pity this people: give not up your realm
To its own madness that takes fire at
yours,
And lights its ruin at your own ruin, to
run
By that blind light darkling to death
and hell;

Cast not your name down under foot of
men
For such ill cause as loveless love that
is
Light lord of foolish women, or such
will
As wherewith men self-slaughtered gird
themselves.
For shame and pity and peril shall be
they
Who shall attend and wed you to your
will,
And the ring broken of the kingdom's
peace
That is yet whole and circular as a crown
Shall be the new ring on your wedded
hand,
Queen. Have I not said I never
thought of it?
Herries. I but beseech you, keep from
thought of it,
Or from such show as puts it in men's
minds,
Queen. If this be all your counsel or
your care,
You crave but what you have: I have
given no cause,
By favor shown to faith and loyal hearts,
For the evil-witted world to tax me of
love.
Twice have you had mine ear now to
this tale,
And thrice I pray you that you seek it
not.
Herries. I shall no more. God keep
your grace in joy!
Enter BOTHWELL and MURRAY.
Queen. Good morrow, brother; and
you, my lord, good day,
Since you go hence.
Bothwell. Goes my lord from us yet?
Herries. Even now I take my leave.
Farewell, my lords,
And God be with your counsels. [*Exit.*
Bothwell. Fay, he shall.
The queen was fain to have your voice,
my lord,
Ere she go back to the distempered
town.
Murray. That shall she have, sir.
Queen. Brother, we hear word
How the good town is troubled of lewd
men

With libels writ and hung about the
streets,
That in our servants' name deface our
own
With fierce invention: wherefore I de-
sired
Your counsel with my lord here and
good help
For satisfaction of well-willing men.

Murray. Even such will tell you it
mislikes the town
That Lennox, as they say, should be
debarred
From entrance save with six men and
no more
To hold his cause up on the trial day,
And the main witness on his part refused
As under charge of treason for his
words
Set forth in writing on the Tolbooth
gates;
This makes them doubt of justice to be
done,
And brood or babble of devised delay,
With tongues and minds diverse and
dangerous.

Queen. What!
Shall one proclaimed our traitor pass
unscathed
To bear again false witness, for whose
sake
The ports are guarded, and the skipper
marked
For death who helps him from this
kingdom forth
To mock the judgment whence he
stands attaint
Of foregone treason; and must now
stand free,
And the law loose him, and receive his
word
As a true man's and taintless? What
are they
Whom by such witness Lennox would
impeach
Besides my lord here who shall answer
him?

Murray. James Balfour, and your
outland serving-folk,
Sebastian, Joseph Rizzio, with two
French,
John of Bordeaux, and Francis, of your
train.

Queen. They shall have trial, and
answer it.

Murray. 'Twere best
They did so soonest: time grows full
of tongues.
There was one late went through the
streets by night,
With four or five accompanied for guard
That would let none take knowledge of
him, crying
Of his own guilt most lamentably on
God,
*Lord, open heaven, and pour down of thy
wrath
Vengeance on me and them that have
cut off
The innocent blood!* whom the chief
magistrates
Have seized, and cast into the four
thieves' pit;
But still his cry hangs in the common
ear.

Queen. Some traitor hired, or mad-
man; but I sent
To seek the comfort of your hand and
help
For weightier cause than of such
tongues.

Murray. What cause?

Queen. That shall he show who bears
most part therein;
Yet are you parcel of it, and I myself
For love of both and honor toward you.
Speak. [To BOTHWELL.]

Bothwell. My lord, I doubt not but
your heart conceived
Never that thing whereto being done
you feared
To set your hand in sign: I therefore
pray you
To look upon the charge for which I
stand
In the land's eye accountable, as one
That was consenting with the rest our
friends
To what for my poor profit was not
done,
Nor only plotted for no end but mine;
And, for the part your honor has herein,
To underwrite the bond that writes me
safe,
And set your name for seal upon my
side.

Queen. So much would I beseech you
too : the bond

By you subscribed here in my lord's
defence

Shall be the signet of your faith and
love

Set on my heart and his that honor you.

Murray. I would my duty might in
all things serve

No less your honor than maintain mine
own ;

But I will set no hand to any bond

Shall bind me to defence or fellowship

Of deeds whereof I know myself no
part.

I gave consent to no more than divorce

Between two hands mismated, king's
and queen's,

Whereby the kingdom's heart was rent
in twain,

And reconciliation found not where to
stand ;

But of no red and secret bond of blood

Heard I the bruit before the deed took
fire.

Bothwell. Will you so swear ? what !
none ?

Murray. I have said ; and you,
That reft your kinsman Balfour by de-
vice

Out of my hand and thwarted judg-
ment, see

Your heart be set not now to climb too
high

A stair whereon the foot that slips
grows red,

And, stumbling once in blood, falls
whence nor wing

Nor hand can lift it from the pit again.

Queen. Vex not yourself lest he
should fall or stand

With whom you stand or fall not.

Bothwell. My desire
Was toward no help of riddling coun-
sellors,

But of such friends as speak with hand
for tongue

And acts for parables : your wit, my
lord,

Is nothing of the queen's need nor of
mine.

Murray. It may be, no ; but to make
trial of that,

Ere I take ship for France, the way
being barred

By force and strife through Flanders to
the south

And those fair towns that with her high
ness' leave

Shall call me guest a while in Italy,

I am bound for London, where I fear
and hope

My tongue may serve her more than
here your hands

If it make fair her cause in English eyes.

Bothwell. What hath her cause to do
with their bleared sight,

Or with her name their judgment ? Who
need care

What color we that breathe with our
own lips

Wear in the mist made of their breath
far off ?

Murray. The ambassador that bore
her last word back

Hath but made way for one at point to
come

Whose message, carrying weight as in
wise ears

It needs must carry, will take form and
force

From present witness of his eye that
reads

What mind is borne here and what
work is done,

What judgment or what counsel most
bears weight ;

Which it imports us for this land's
great sake

That the English queen misknow not
nor misread

For fault or fraud of darkling evidence

Bothwell. And you it is must give
those blind eyes sight,

Shape to the shadows of that ignorance,
form

To their loose judgment of us ? What
have we,

What hath our Scotland here or queen
of Scots,

To do with English tongues ? can we
not strike

Nor stand nor walk alone, but for our
need

Must use their hands and feet, their wits
and eyes,

To help us live, or live not? By my
life,
Which is not held in pawn yet of their
leave,
I had rather be an English horse or ass
Than on these terms a Scot, to square
my will
By their inscribed conditions.

Murray. At your will
Lies your own way of life; nor yet this
land's,
Nor theirs that living should be lords
of it.

Madam, to God's care I commend your
grace
Who take with careful heart my leave
of you,
Lest you too much should lack the care
of men.

Queen. Be not too careful for my
sake: your leave
Was given ere you could take it. Sir,
farewell.

Murray. Farewell, as you shall will
it. [Exit.

Bothwell. God be with you!
Your wisdom shall not be so hot of
foot
But it may be outspeeded. If it lay
Plots with the stranger, our prevention
here
Must pluck the fangs out of its craft.
And first
With his own hand shall Huntley draw
the bond
Whereto will we set ours in pledge ere
long
To make them fast by contract: I being
free
To plight mine own, as by consent un-
bound
From hers that was my wife pretended;
you,
Being by this troublous time bent and
inclined
To seek some stay in wedlock, and put
off
The weak estate of widowhood, yet
loath,
For worthy reasons of grave strength,
to choose
Again a stranger subject, have made
choice

Of me desertless for my fair deserts,
And purpose even on heel of my di-
vorce

For their good cause to wed me: this
subscribed

Shall in my keeping 'be laid up, and
straight

Hence must we back to that loud town
of yours,

And take our danger by the throat;
proclaim

At once my trial; if it be possible,
Before word come from England; let
the post

That brings your counsel of Elizabeth's
Find the cause judged, and the cry fallen
again,

And no link hanging of the gyves of
law

Round our free feet and steadfast.

Queen. Ah! not mine,
That are fast bound, and yet can stand
not fast

Except my love's strength hold them
up, and strike

These iron toils in sunder. If the bond
Could bind and loose indeed, knit and
unknit

Hands that must part from hands that
are to meet,

With force of more than writing, all
my heart

Should bleed glad drops to sign and
seal it. Sir,

Here was again our enemy in mine ears
Forewarning me of marriage; the same
tongue

That was before a serpent at your heel
Shot out anew to sting it; but you know
The craft of this state horseleech, that
by fraud

Takes pleasure to bear all the world in
hand

That no one can be sure of him, and
we

May least of all be by such lips allured
To trust and find them dangerous.

Bothwell. Nay, by God,
I mind me how he left his neighbor
friends

In his faith's name to hang for hostages
Whose necks paid forfeit of his broken
bond,

And made his oath a halter for the
Lairds
Of Lochinvar and Garlies. By my life
That this keen tongue would strike at,
in my mind
It were the best work worth a good
man's hand
To quit them on Lord Herries.

Queen. No, let be:
You will unpeople me this land of
friends.

Mine he must live, or lose his name,
and yours

For my name's sake he shall be.

Bothwell. So might I
Find at his hands such friendship as
they twain

Whose throats for him were writhen;
and such a friend

Is he that stands behind our deed, and
says

He never heard of manslaying, fie! not
he, —

Our darkling brother with close lips
and clean.

The blood was no part of his bond, he
says,

That his eyes winked on while his hand
was dry;

He will not bear us witness, nor take
part

With me that have done more than
blink at blood.

He will to London, but to speak for
you,

That will he, being a kindly man of
kind,

Whole-blooded in his love and faith to
you,

God wot, no bastard in his brotherhood.
I would give God a year out of my life

That I have kinglike hope to live with
you,

For one sweet breath of time to strike
at him,

And let my sword's lip drink his body
dry,

And with one deep kiss drain his flesh
of blood.

Who smells not by the savor of his
faith

On what close nest of foul and fledg-
ling hopes

His trust sits brooding to build up him-
self

By overthrowing of that crowned head
which keeps

His misbegotten forehead bare of
gold —

And with my hand shall keep it?

Queen. Ay, though all
That breathe on earth mine enemies at
his beck

Rose by the light of his ambiguous
eyes

With his sheathed hand to strike, and
leave ungirt

This forfeit head with empire: but I
know

A stronger hand bared for my help and
stay, —

This that I touch, this that I love; the
star —

That points my feet on pilgrimage, the
staff

That stays my steps back to that trou-
bulous town

Whereof they are weary, yet would halt
not now,

But tread more fleet than fire their fiery
way

To that fair end where they were fain
to be.

He will set forth to-morrow.

Bothwell. Ere we go,
I will take order that men's tongues be
clipt

Who show too broad their conscience
of remorse.

There was a knave of Balfour's in our
trust

That hath by this, being found unsure
of mouth,

Resigned it to the counsel-keeping
worm.

If more there be that live not stingless
yet,

The same dumb mouth that has nor
lips nor tongue

Must open for them privily: the grave
Hath gorge enough for all such secret
food,

And will not babble of the hands that
feed.

For them that being in blood of our
own kind

Will stand elsewhere against me than
in court,

I will make present proffer of myself
To answer them in arms.

Queen. You shall not fight.

Bothwell. Not if no need be.

Queen. There shall be no need.

Not in this cause, you shall not need to
fight.

We will set on the trial presently,
And after we may sleep with no blood
more.

SCENE IV.—THE UPPER CHAMBER
IN HOLYROOD.

The QUEEN and MARY BEATON.

Queen. Is it not hard on ten?

Mary Beaton. At point to strike.

Queen. This forenoon will outlast the
night for length.

How looks the morning?

Mary Beaton. Like the time of year:
The heaven is red, and full of wind;
the clouds

Are rent and routed of the striving sun
Like a lost army.

Queen. Is there no noise abroad?

Mary Beaton. The throngs grow thick
in rumor; faces scowl,
Eyes burn, brows bend, and all the cry
o' the crowd

Waits to break forth but till a fire-
flaught fall

To make the dumb brands speak, and
shoot out flame,

When he shall pass for whom it waits
to burn.

Yet have I seen as great a throng from
hence

As frets there now.

Queen. I would he had thought to-
day

To ride with doubled guard! What
brawl is there?

Mary Beaton. The messenger from
Berwick, as I think,

That would have entrance to you, and
is thrust back

By the lord Bothwell's kin that keep
the gates.

Queen. What! here so soon? I will
not see him till night.

I am asleep; if there be brawls i' the
court,

Call out the troopers, bid my French
guard forth

To quell all rioters.

Mary Beaton. They are of your own
part

That make the brawl, my lord's men
and your guard

That press about the gateway.

Queen. The cry sinks:

Is he not come, that so their noise is
fallen?

Mary Beaton. And Maitland with
him: he signs them silent, takes
From the English messenger a letter
sealed,

And leaves all still.

Queen. I prayed him see me first
Before he rode to trial. All will be well,
If he have stayed their storm, and keep
his heart

High as his fortune.

Enter BOTHWELL.

Is that brawl at end?

Bothwell. Here is a letter by a hot-
foot post

Brought from Sir William Drury, that
his queen

Through him commends her counsel in
to you,

And bids you, or my thought belies it,
show

All favor and furtherance to your
enemy's plea,

Lennox, whose cause she finds most
fair, and would not

For your own sake see slighted or put
by,

Lest your fame bleed: look if she say
not so;

Else I know nothing of her maiden
mind,

Who sometime lived her prisoner.

Queen. Let that rest;

But tell me what the spring was of this
noise

That shook our hearing: would he
speak perforce—

This English post, though bidden back
—with me?

Bothwell. But that our fellows thrust
him from the gate:

My captain of the castle, a stalwart
guard,
The Laird of Skirling, that I put in
charge,
Called to the guide aloud, he should be
hanged
For bringing English villains through
to us here,
And hands were there to reive the
rope to him;
Then drew your guard together and
our troops,
Whose musters line the straitened
streets with steel
That holds embanked their muttering
multitudes
Fill I ride through; and those within
the gates
Hurtled together with blind cries and
thrusts,
But at my sight fell silent as a sea
Settling, that growls yet with the sunken
wind,
And holds its peace with unslaked
wrath. Then I
Took from the pressed and laboring
messenger
His letter for your hand, who were not
risen,
And should ere night receive him: so I
said,
And thus it shall suffice you do, so
be it
We bear the bell to-day in parliament,
Where I should be by this at bar, to
stand
And make mine answer.

Queen. I am not sick of fear,
Yet my heart loathes its burden of this
hour,
And beats and drops like a bird wound-
ed. Nay,
I do not hold you: go; 'tis but my hand
Fastens on yours; my heart would have
you gone,
And here again to assure me of good
speed.
Whom have we of the judges on our
side,
Tell me once more, whom doubtful-
colored, whom
Our enemies certain? let me know it
again,

That I may read the bede-roll of their
names
Here over in my heart while you are
gone
To make it sure and strong, come evil
or good,
That neither find me heartless.
Bothwell. Of our part
The lord of Arbroath for the Hamil-
tons
Is as his father's person, Chatelherault,
And Cassilis a mainstay safe as steel;
Caithness and Herries are such friends
of yours
As love me less for your sake, yet I
think
Must strike to-day beside us; one man
most
I would we might have razed out of the
roll,
Which is the assessor Lindsay; who
shall be
As poison to us; and evil is our chance
That Morton being of kin to your dead
man
Should not sit here to help, as but for
this
I would perforce have bound him to
our side:
But let this be; we shall bear bravely
through
For all their factions and fierce policies
As knives ensheathed against us, or
being foiled
Find surer issue than they wot of. So,
With such good hope as grows of a
good heart,
Give me God-speed.

Queen. God-speed you as I pray
You may speed ever: all my prayer is
spent,
I can no more of wishing; what I
would,
That must you will, having my heart in
you,
That beats but with your blood, thrills
with your sense,
Thinks with your thought, desires with
your desire,
And lives upon your living. Where
you go,
You bear me with you; where your
face is set

Mine eye takes outlook, and where falls
your foot

I tread beside you silent. Oh! this day
Shall be to us as the crown o' the wave
that turns,

And bears inshore the lading of our
lives,

With all the might of its great heart
that breaks

And brings us into harbor; we shall
stand

High on the beach where it was spent,
and praise

The faithful hour that served us; yea,
even this

Shall be a dear one to us, nēd fast at
heart

When all the pain and doubt of it is
dead,

And lovingly remembered: you shall
look

From your high place beside your hum-
ble love

With kingly eye on this dead day, and
think

How she that set her crown about your
head,

And put her own beneath your foot, as
now

Bade you fare forth, and kissed you.

Bothwell. I am returned,
Ere I pass forth, already in my heart,
With my cause crowned: I cannot
doubt of speed,

Who have your face before mine eyes
as fire

And keep your words' heat in mine ear
to burn

If I should shrink, and sting my spirit
alive

For love's and shame's sake. When
we meet at night,

A king's kiss will I set upon these lips
That seal me royal ere I part. Fare-
well. [*Exit.*]

Queen. I would mine eye were in my
heart to go

With that beside him; but the heart it
is

Sits now in the eye and follows where
it may,

But a street's length; then part they,
and the sight

Turns back, but not the thought; such
wings it hath

As the sight hath not, and is subtler
nerved

Than the swift spirit of the eye. O my
life's light!

This is not I that looks forth after you
To feed her eyesight, but who leaves

you not,
Who rides beside you, breathes out of
your lips,

Looks through your eyes, and triumphs
in your heart,—

That unseen and inseparate thing is I.
Look, he is up: how royally he rides,

As no king else on earth! and waves to
me,

As who should say, Be glad; and glad
I am,

Who have the lordliest lover in the
world,

And the most heart to love him. Ay,
that steed

Should be the higher of heart that
feels him stride,

And moves the merrier-mettled: by
none such

Was it before bestriden.

Mary Beaton. Was not this
Lord Darnley's horse?

Queen. Ay, when Lord Darnley was.

Mary Beaton. The horse he loved of
all the rest, and fed

Ere he bestrode it ever?

Queen. Like enough:

What ails it yet to have eaten of his
hand?

It bears not now the worse a better
man.

Mary Beaton. Nay, so it seems: it
bounds not as in wrath,

For aught I see, beneath him, but
heaves up

A sidelong head toward his new hand,
and turns

The light back on him of a joyful
eye.

So is it with only beasts that are be-
loved:

They have not hearts like ours.

Queen. What need they have?
I would have nothing love him as I
love,

And had it heart it would; yet I do think

Ali beasts and men are mad that love him not

As I should surely were I beast or man.

He can no longer see my handkerchief;
Let us go in: I will not sit and wait
With the street's hustling faces in my sight. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.—THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE IN THE TOLBOOTH.

BOTHWELL, with ORMISTON and others attending, at the bar; ARGYLE, assisting as Lord Justice; LINDSAY as assessor; CAITHNESS, CASSILIS, ROTHES, ARBROATH, MAXWELL, HERRIES, and others, as jury; ROBERT CUNNINGHAM as spokesman for Lennox.

Ormiston (aside to BOTHWELL). Fie! look not down so at your feet, my lord:

What devil is this that irks you? in your face

A fool might read you what you are: why, so

Might a man look that were now going to death.

Hold up your face, for God's sake, and look blithe;

Alas and aye woe worth them that devised

The thing that shall make all us mourn, I trow,

For you that now look sadly.

Bothwell. Hold your peace:

I would not yet it were to do; I have
An outgate any way whereby to pass,
As ye shall know, and soon. Trouble me not.

Argyle. My lords, ye have heard how to the indictment read

The accused who stands at his own instance here

Returns his plea of guiltless; and thereon

The accuser next invoked to approve his charge,

Nor answering nor appearing, leaves no cause

For us to judge; but here in his default
Is risen his servant to sustain his part
And unawares among us unrequired
Take up this charge here fallen, or stretch at least

Some form across of pretext wide enough

To cover with excuse this lack of charge,

Which else might seem with emptiness of cause

To mock your judgments; wherefore, if ye will,

He stands to plead before us.

Caithness. We are content.

Robert Cunningham. My lords, I am here but in my master's name,
The earl of Lennox, to declare what cause

This day constrains his absence; which in brief

Is first the brief time given for so great work,

Next that he stands now naked of his friends

And fellowship of servants to maintain His honor with the surety of his life;

And, having help of no friend but himself,

He hath laid on me commandment to desire

A day sufficient for that weight of cause Which he shall have to keep it; and if hence

Your lordships at this present shall proceed,

Here I protest that if the assize to-day,

By their twelve persons that upon this charge

Shall enter now on panel, speak him clear

Who stands accused for murder of the king,

It shall be wilful error in men's eyes, And not abuse of ignorance, by this cause

That all men know him for murderer; and hereto

Upon this protestation I require

Of your high court a document to stand

And set my lord's right here on register,

And those men's wrong who put it by to-day.

Argyle. This is some reason if the ground be good

Whereon his protest is built up, to excuse

Default of witness by defect of time;

But here that ground is shaken, that we find,

By letters of his own writ to the queen,

My lord of Lennox earnest to bring on,

With forward expedition as of fire,

This cause for trial, and by all pleas intent

To enforce this court make haste, and being convoked

Despatch with breathless justice and short stay

The work wherein he seems to accuse us now

For too much heat to move too fast, and mar

The perfect end of trial with force of speed,

Preventing him of witness. Wherefore then

Was his own will so keen, his plaint so loud,

So strong his protestation, to procure

The speed too late reproached, too soon required?

Here are we met for judgment, whom himself

Bade the queen summon, with insistent heat

And sharp solicitation urged of wrong,

Nay, with the stroke of an imperative tongue,

As though to impel some loath or lag-gard heart,

And found instead a free and forward will

In her to meet his own; here sits the court,

There stands the man of him or his impeached

To give them loyal answer; where sits he?

Where speaks his proof? where stand his witnesses?

What sentence of what judges shall be given

Where none stands forth to accuse:

Here are but words,
Surmises, light and loud and loose, that blow

In the air of nameless lips and babblers' breath

From ear to ear about the wide-mouthed world:

These are not for our judgment.

Caithness. We sit here

To find if there be proof or likelihood
More than of common tongues that mark a man

Guilty, and know not why this man or that,

But some name they must have to feed upon;

And in my mind, where witness there is none

Nor prosecution of a personal cause,
Even should we err to find the accused

man free,
It were no wilful error, nor this court

In any just man's sight accountable
As for unrighteous judgment, being cut off

From evidence that it was met to hear;
Which we reject not, but require in-

deed,
Yet can by no solicitous mean procure.

Moreover, sirs, one flaw there is to note,
More evident than these proofs in-

visible, —
Even in the letter of the charge, which

bears,
Ye see, the ninth day's date of Febru-

ary,
When all we know that on the tenth it

was
This violence, by what hand soe'er, was

done:
So that I see not, for my simple part,

How any man, for that which no man
did,

Should stand condemned; for at this
date assigned

Was no such deed as this done in the
world.

Maxwell. Why, let the charge be
drawn again, and straight:

The court is mocked in this.

Caithness. How mocked, my lord?

It is necessity of law, to keep

Pure hands by perfect heed of flawless words;

And that you stood the dead man's friend alive

Gives you not right nor reason to rise up
And tax the reason or the right of law.

Maxwell. Right! where is right in
all this circumstance,

Or ought but wrong and broken judgment? where

Justice or shame or loyalty, to try

The truth whereon red fraud and violence tread,

And smother up the tongueless cry of blood?

Are we not here to judge of murder done,

And either from an innocent brow take off

The spot of its suspicion, or convince
The branded forehead of bloodguiltiness?

Is there no counsel on the part accused,
Nor answer of defensive argument

But of close-lipped evasion? and the court

In this forsooth is mocked not! We shall stand

The shameful signs of laughter to the world,

And loathing to men loyal, if this pass
With no more trial but mockery, and the land

Sit silent, and attain of innocent blood
Before the face of all men that expect

For our own sake what justice we shall show

Or be defamed forever.

Arbroath. Sirs, meseems

Where no charge is, that no response can be;

Where none impeaches, none can stand accused:

And of what mouth what challenge is put forth,

And on what witness what impeachment hangs,

To implead of guilt the man we sit to try?

Herein I say it is the court is mocked,
Even all of us, and all the baffled land,

And most this noble man that unaccused

Stands at our bar, and finds not to confront

One witness, nor one enemy to beat back,

But only as 'twere a wind that sounds, a breath

That shifts and falters in the face of proof,

A blast that envy blows, and fear breaks off,

Disabled of its nature, by itself

Frustrate and maimed of its own evil will.

Lindsay. Who talks of envious or of fearful heart?

We hear the general judgment of the land

Cry out for trial, and from foreign tongues

Reproach cast on us that we cast off heed:

What should we do for shame if in this cause,

For doubt of one man's friends or of what power

Might stand behind to buckler him at need,

We durst not move, nor, though the world looked on,

Show but a face of justice?

Cassilis. Must we set

Our judgments by the common tongue that strikes,

And knows not what the hour is? or become

Thralls to the praise and bondmen to the blame

Of men by no tie blood-bound to our love,

To make our lives look in their foreign sight

Fair, lest they speak us evil? By my head,

No Scot I hold him, but a strange man's knave,

Whose spirit is shrunk or swollen by their breaths.

Argyle. Well, let the votes be given, and each man's doom

Affirm if in his true and equal mind
The charge be proven upon my lord, or no.

How go the voices?

Lindsay. By one-half their dooms
The lords here of the jury speak him
free
With clear acquittal of bloodguilti-
ness:
One-half is voiceless.

Argyle. He then is proclaimed
Of this high court not guilty, and the
charge
On trial stands not good against him.
Sir,

The court upon this plea declares for
you,
You are found free of blood.

Bothwell. My noble lords,
Being proved thus in your judgments
clear of crime,
Here on this door will I to-day set up
My personal challenge in mine honor's
right

To meet in arms, before what judge he
will,

What gentleman soever undefamed
Shall take upon him to confront my
cause.

For their lewd mouths who threat, and
wear no sword,

Your judgment given to acquit me shall
abash

The malice it puts power into mine
arm

With might of right to baffle. Sirs,
good day.

[*Exit with ORMISTON and his follow-
ers.*

Argyle. Break up the court: the
cause is judged.

Maxwell (to LINDSAY). Is judged?
I know not of such seed what stem
will spring,

But that fruit sour as gall and red as
blood.

For men's false mouths must of this
judgment grow.

I would I saw less surely than I see.

SCENE VI. — THE HIGH STREET.

BURGESSES and PEOPLE.

First Citizen. What more of shame
is laid up for us? when
Will Heaven put forth a hand to touch
with fire

These naked sins, and shrivel? Have
you heard

What last lies bare for judgment?

Second Citizen. Why, the last
Is not this half-hour's shame: each
stroke each day

Strikes out a fresh one, that five minutes
old

Dies of the next forgotten. Yesterday
Some talk was of the challenge yet,
which now

No man casts thought on, though by
two good swords

Was battle proffered: by the stout
Laird first

Of Tullibardine, in that brother's name
Whom they for fear have taxed of
treason, so

To eschew his proof and peril; he
defies

The challenger to combat, and requires
England and France for judges of the
field

In person of their sovereigns; this re-
fused,

On such new plea as craven craft may
find,

With his queen's leave the ambassador
himself

Of England gladly with his own heart's
will

Would take the personal cause upon
him.

First Citizen. What!
Is it for fault of Scots to match and
mate

The pride in Bothwell swoln with inno-
cent blood

None but Sir William Drury may be
held

Worth his sword's wrath that walks by
night?

Third Citizen. Perchance
As for his queen he stands here deputy,
And for our own her champion opposite,
Afield with swords' play or abed with
lips',

They hold the match more equal.

Fourth Citizen. Nay, this news
Is gray of beard already; hear you not
How by this priestly parliament of
ours,

That to beguile us and for no good-will

Hath in the queen's name passed its
 act to affirm
 God's present gospel stablished in this
 realm,
 The murderer lives now twice absolved
 of blood,
 And has by voice of prelates and of
 earls
 The assize allowed for good that purged
 him first,
 And shall be loosened of his marriage-
 bond
 That twelve months since was tied?
 his brother-in-law
 Shall have again his forfeit lands, and
 see
 His sister from her married bed thrust
 out,
 And stir no finger; then without more
 stay
 Who sees not where the adulterer's
 foot shall climb,
 And by what head his own be pillowed?
 Nay,
 These papers hung against our walls by
 night
 Are tongues that prophesy but truth;
 ye saw
 That likeness of a hare enringed with
 swords,
 And of a mermaid crowned with burn-
 ing eyes
 Who drove the hounds off with a two-
 thonged scourge
 That coursed him trembling; and her
 hand indeed
 Is found not slow to smite; a law now
 lives
 Denouncing on his head no less than
 death
 Who shall set up, or seeing shall pluck
 not down,
 Such placards writ: the first soe'er who
 finds
 And leaves the writing that defames
 her friend
 To pass among the people, at her will
 Shall lie in bonds; but if this brand
 herself,
 Then must the man that spared it or
 that set
 Die; so the fire-eyed queen of ship-
 wreck sings

Death in their ears who sail this
 dangerous sea
 Whereon the ship reels of our stagger-
 ing state,
 And with the flame shot from her eyes
 puts out
 The light of theirs that were as light-
 nings turned
 On her hare-hearted lover.
Third Citizen. Yet they lack
 The power with boast or menace to
 seal up
 The lips of poor men; but three days
 ago
 As she rode through the Grassmarket I
 heard
 How from their stalls the women cried
 on her,
God save your grace! but with this
 added word
 That smote the smile upon her lips to
 death,
If ye be spotless of the dead king's blood.
Second Citizen. Such words and souls
 mount nigher God's ear and eye
 Than theirs who lent this man their
 hands to slay
 And tongues to purge him of their gen-
 eral sin, —
 He of St. Andrew's, and his under
 priest,
 Bishop of Ross, Leslie and Hamiltons,
 Whose lips are bloody, and that double
 soul
 Argyle, that steers their faction; and
 this crew
 Masked here as mouthpiece of the
 loathing land
 Must hide the people's heart and true
 men's truth
 With craft of prattling prelates; yet
 such mouths
 As are unlocked and locked again with
 gold
 But gape till God shall pluck their
 tongues out.
Fifth Citizen. Yea,
 Ye hear but this, and have to burn your
 ears
 No hotter news of these men, or what
 bond
 Bears written broad and brave such
 names as these

Of earls and bishops? this is strange
yet, sirs,
That fires my cheek to tell you?

Second Citizen. Why, men said
There was a knot that met of these to
sup,
Shut in with Bothwell's hackbutter for
guard,
That drew round Ainslie's Tavern,
where they sat
Like a strait hoop of steel to bind them
safe
And hold them fast from starting; and
some bond
Of these his guests at Bothwell's prayer
subscribed
There was that bound them to him,
against all foes
That might impeach him of the crime
discharged
By the open court's acquittal, from this
day
To take his part upon them, and stand
fast
As to their own cause, being made sub-
ject all
To slander and suspicion that but grows
Of honor and high credit held with kings:
So much we heard, and found not
strange.

Fifth Citizen. Nay, this
Was but the grace that served their
banquet in
Of meats as strong as poison; there
ensued
A pledge more mortal of a bond more
base;
Considering this time present, how the
queen
Stood husbandless, and how the gen-
eral weal
Might let her not long live so, should
her mind
By thought of his true services be
moved
To take the earl Bothwell to her loving
lord,
They and each man there met of them
should plight
His honor, truth, and heart's fidelity
To advance this marriage with all
furtherance given
Of counsel, satisfaction, and good help,

As soon as law might give it leave to
be,
And as their common enemy should
esteem
What man soever of evil will to them
Might seek its hinderance; and to this
were set
More than those names ye spake of;
be it for fear,
For craft or vantage, none of these fell
off
Save Eglinton that slipped for shame
away,
And Morton with the secretary, that
gave
Their voice yet for this marriage, but
would seal
No general bond of service on his side
Save these, no priest or peer of them
but lives
His servant pledged; their hands,
tongues, counsels, hearts,
His or not theirs, and all they man
sworn men.

Third Citizen. I have assurance of a
true man's faith,
That word was writ of this confederacy
To the English council from the Laird
of Grange,
Desiring knowledge with what ear their
queen
Shall take these tidings; and albeit of
late,
In all our trouble being found slow to
help
She hath lost the love here borne her,
if her grace
For this late murder will pursue re-
venge,
She shall win all the hearts of all the
best
Again, he says, in Scotland; who should
be,
With her good help and favor, swift to
take
This vengeance on them, and redeem
from fear
Their prince's life now trembling in the
reach
Of hands that slew his father; for our
queen
Hath sworn she cares not for her lover's
sake

To lose France, England, and her natural land,
And would go with him to the wild world's end,
Stript to her smock, ere leave him.

Second Citizen. Has he writ
So much to the English court of her?
being ours,
He should let shame keep silence of
her shame.

First Citizen. What shame or silence
can shut up for shame
That which at noon walks clamorous
of itself
And boastful to be naked? They will
wed,
Though thunder sound forth sin, and
while God speaks

Will kiss in sight of lightning.

Fourth Citizen. Was there not
Some noise of strife arisen for fault of
pay
Among their crew of Bothwell's villains
here
That hold by force of hand the palace
gates?

Second Citizen. Such rumor was, for
certain; and himself
Strode in among the middle mutiny
Like a thieves' captain, and being
braved of them
Caught by the throat one that was lord
o' the brawl,
And would have slain but for the throng
that cried
And drove upon him shouting, till for
fear

He was even fain to stop with promises
Their mouths who clamored; which to
see fulfilled
Needs must he sit no lower than doth
a king.

Third Citizen. So then the gates are
open, and the queen
By leave of these her guards, and him
their chief,
May part in peace for Stirling now to
see

Her son in ward there of the castellan?
Where we, God knows, may give him
thanks that one
So wise as the earl of Mar and stout of
heart

Hath our born king in covert, who
might sleep
On that sweet breast that bore him not
so safe

As in a hand so honest.

First Citizen. Ay, God help,
There is no surety in such housekeep-
ing
As thunder comes forth of the sky by
night

To fall upon and burn it, yet no storm
Save of men's making seen, nor fire in
heaven

Save what rose up from under. Verily,
Our good lord Bothwell spake but
truth, who said

To good James Melville, how so strange
a thing

On earth was never known of: pity 'tis
He could not come to look upon the
corpse,

Though Bothwell bade him, seeing it
was removed;

It was his hapless chance to find it
gone

And in safe keeping of some secret
hand

That waited on it living; such things
are:

The worse hap his. They say it had
no wound;

So if by some mischance, as God for-
bid,

The prince were reft unluckily of life,
I think he should have none for eye to
see

That might read evil.

Third Citizen. Who shall ride with
her?

Second Citizen. Why, no great train,
lest being within the walls
She take the child into her hand, and
give

For better care to Bothwell's, with the
keys

That keep this castle too; but yet I
think

His hand nor hers shall put God's
judgment back

That waits to take them triumphing,
and turn

To tears their laughter and our grief to
joy.

SCENE VII. — STIRLING CASTLE.

The QUEEN and HUNTLEY.

Queen. Will you go back from us?

Huntley. I like it not;

I do not see how this may be made good.

Queen. There is no flaw but in your fainter heart;

The way is fair and even; I cannot think

What seed is in men's hearts that brings forth fear

Out of all season. Why are you so sad?

The thing is no more dangerous than it was

When our first plot was laid; nay, so much less

By how much these are ours whose names and bonds

Speak on our side inscribed.

Huntley. Madam, not so;

The earl of Sutherland, whose forfeiture

Your grace but now remitted with mine now,

When we shall meet my brother's men in arms,

Will die before he yield you to their hands.

Queen. My lord, you have no brother of him now

That was your sister's husband. I will write

To bid him bring up men enough to out-match

All that ride with us homeward, and so far

That none the hardiest shall but think on fight.

Three hundred hath your earl? then in his rank

There shall be more than of our company,

That I to spare men's blood may yield myself.

Huntley. It is too gross and foolishly devised;

When I spake last with him, he laid on you

The charge to say where we should meet and when.

And what should by contrivance plead for me,

To save my name though you be yielded up

Who ride with me for escort; all this charge

He lays on you, and bids me write again

What you shall say by letter; of himself

He moves not yet; and I beseech you think,

Before you move him, in what enterprise

You put to pledge your honor, that can never

With honor wed him who being wedded man

By force and violent hand hath borne you off;

Nor will my folk endure it, I wot well,

But it must come to trial by hap of fight

With doubt and accident of answering arms:

Where, if we fail on our part, then on his

Shall be the blame and bloody note of war

Made on your personal guard; but if we win

That ride with you as followers, then is he

The most forlorn of men revolted; else,

I shall be called of all that sin on earth

The most unthankful traitor, who being now

But newly of your grace remade your man

Shall yield you up by treason without blows

Into a rebel's handling; and the lord's, I doubt, when they shall see you in his hold,

Will think not much to unswear their oaths, deny

Their words and hands as given through force or fear,

And signed not of their hearts; I pray, think of it,

And take some other counsel to your mind.

Queen. My lord, if you bear back my word to him,
 It shall be this: that, seeing I am come so far,
 If of his own will he withdraw him not,
 For no persuasion nor for death itself Will I be brought to break my faith with him.
 For this you say of them that follow you,
 And of your fear to bear a thankless name
 For my supposed betraying, you should by now
 With him have taken counsel of the chance,
 And not have thrown it here across my way,
 Who have no choice to pass not over it, Seeing I may turn not back for life or death,
 For fear or shame or love of any man. As for the place, he doth not well to cast
 On me too even the election: let him choose,
 And send me word, with pardon that herein
 I tax my lord of too much negligence. For those your followers whom you most misdoubt,
 You shall be wise to weed our train of them
 If any wise mean be to draw them forth.
 This is my counsel, of a simple wit And womanish, but not so vile at heart As to go back for danger from its faith. I pray you so report of me, and say, When he shall ask you of my mind again,
 No more but this word only: and farewell. [Exit HUNTLEY.
 This faint-heart honesty with half a hand
 Is falser found at need than falsehood's self,
 And ever was of me more hated. Oh, That I might take these hours as in my hand
 And men that yet divide us, with one grasp

To gripe them dead and pluck his fang from time
 That waits to fasten on us unawares And make love mortal with the kiss that kills!
 A day and night are as a long life's length
 That part the hungering from the perfect hour,
 The void from the fulfilling.—Nay, come in.
Enter MARY BEATON and PARIS.
Mary Beaton. Here waits my lord of Bothwell's messenger
 To bear your word back of Lord Huntley's mind.
Queen. Ay, that I found it trustless. Tell my lord
 He makes me mad to put his faith in him
 And to mistrust that which is wholly his,
 Even her true heart to whom he should have sent
 Word every day what she should do for him,
 And hath done nothing of it. I did say
 He should take heed of that false brother-in-law,
 Of whom his negligence and heedless faith
 Have put us in the danger; on my part There has lacked nothing toward the work in hand,
 And had he not more changed his mind than I
 Since I went from him, he should need not now
 By stranger's lips inquire of my resolve. Say how you see me, and till he send me word
 That I will here lie sick, as God he knows
 What health I have at heart. Would I were dead,
 For all I see goes ill; but tell your lord
 This was not in his promise that I find, Nor no such matter; but he lets me see
 What power has absence on him, to whose bow

His hand has yet another string than
 mine.
 And look you warn him of this brother-
 in-law
 That he hath babbled of our enterprise
 Wherein he puts but forth a heartless
 hand,
 And in what great men's ears he well
 may guess
 Who knows which most are dangerous;
 yet methinks
 If still we have need to flatter them, so
 much
 Might naturally be pleaded on his part,
 That his good service and long amity
 Might well deserve his pardon and
 their love
 If past a subject's duty he put forth,
 Not to constrain me, but assure himself
 Of such place nigh me that no foreign
 tongue
 May by strange counsel hinder my con-
 sent
 To that whereto he trusts his service
 shall
 Make him one day to attain; with such
 excuse
 Shall he persuade them that he stands
 compelled
 To make pursuit against his enemies:
 And he may find fair words at will to
 say
 To Maitland most of all, through whose
 keen tongue
 We hold the rest by the ear; but if at
 last
 The deed of our device mislike him
 now,
 Let him send word, and leave not on my
 head
 The blame of all; and if it like him
 yet,
 Say I beseech him for the honor of
 God
 To come with no less force accom-
 panied
 Than of three hundred men; rather
 with more,
 For that is all the main part of my
 care;
 Seeing as for Huntley, I assure myself
 He in our play shall henceforth bear no
 part

But of an honest and a fearful man
 Whose thought and all his toil of heart
 it is
 To keep the load of treason from his
 name.
 Therefore I would not have my lord in
 all
 Trust or mistrust him, but be circum-
 spect
 And take more power unto him.
Paris. So shall I say;
 Your highness hath no message more
 for me?
Queen. God wot no time it is for us
 to change
 Tokens and toys of love; yet I would
 send,
 For very sorrow, something but in sign
 That of my heart's grief I accuse not
 him
 For his cold writing or forgetfulness,
 His little memory of me and little care,
 And least of all his promise-breach,
 being now
 So far made his that what thing pleases
 him
 Is acceptable to me, and all my thoughts
 To his so willingly subdued, that all
 That comes of him proceeds of no
 such root,
 In mine esteem, as loveless negligence
 Nor any love's lack, but such only
 cause
 As I desire, being just and reasonable,
 Which is the final order he should
 take
 For his own surety and honor, who
 alone
 Is my life's stay for which I only will
 Preserve it, and without which in this
 world
 My soul desires not but a sudden death.
 Bear therefore to him, for testimony of
 me,
 How lowly I submit me to his law
 In sign of homage this that I take off
 Of my head's ornament, which is the
 chief
 And guide of other members, as to say
 How being possessed of that as of a
 spoil
 Which is the principal, he needs must
 have

The remnant subject to him with heart's
 consent.
 And for that heart, that seeing I have
 left it him
 Long since I have not now in hand to
 give,
 This stone instead I send him, painted
 black
 And sown with tears and bones, a
 sepulchre
 Whereto my heart is likened, being
 as it
 Carved like a tomb or certain recep-
 tacle
 To harbor his commandments in, and
 hold
 More fast than all his memory and his
 name
 Therein enclosed as in the ring my
 hair,
 To come forth never till the grant of
 death
 Shall let him rear a trophy of my
 bones,
 As is the ring full of them, set therein
 For sign he has made full conquest of
 my heart,
 That even the bones must be to him
 bequeathed
 For memory of his victory and my loss
 That was so sweet to me: tell him but
 this,
 And say that by the enamelling of black
 He shall discern her steadfastness who
 sends
 And by the tears my fears innumerable
 Lest I displease him, and those tears I
 shed
 For his dear absence and for heart's
 disdain
 That I may not in outward shape be
 his
 As with full strength and heart and
 spirit I am,
 And with good cause; for were my
 merit more
 Than hers of all born ever for men's
 love
 Found worthiest and most perfect, and
 as much
 As I desire it might be in his eye,
 Well might I so rest ever, and shall
 strive

Still to maintain me in his government
 As worthily as I may. Say, I beseech
 him
 That is mine only good, in as good part
 To take it at my hand as I at his
 With extreme joy received our marriage
 bond,
 That till the marriage of our bodies be
 Made publicly shall part not from my
 breast,
 Which keeps it now in sign of all the
 bliss
 I can or hope for or desire on earth:
 And that my letter here brake off for
 dread
 Lest this as much should weary him to
 read
 As I took joy to write it; therefore,
 say,
 Here did I set a kiss as on his hand
 With such devotion as I pray to God
 To give him long and blessed life, and
 me
 That only good of all which I desire
 And only may pretend to in the world,
 His love and his good favor who doth
 hold
 Alone my life up; and this trust I
 showed
 To you in whom I know the trust he
 hath
 As I shall for his sake whose wife I
 am,
 His humble and obedient lawful wife,
 To whom my heart and body are dedi-
 cate
 And shall in no wise unto death be
 changed
 Nor good nor evil make me go from it.
 So tell him, and despatch.

[Exit PARIS.

What said Lord Mar

Touching the child's charge to you?

Mary Beaton. But thus much:

That he would never let it from his
 hand
 Save with assent of the three several
 states,
 And on condition there shall be pro-
 claimed
 Some honest lord and worthy such a
 charge
 As captain of the castle of Edinburgh,

Where only may the prince, he says, lie
safe

From them that slew his father.

Queen. Ay, so brave?

There speaks a man of trust, found
honorable.

I had as lief be dead as see such men
Stand so at point to thwart me: by my
life,

I hold it not a straw's worth in the scale
If I must live so shackled. What! and
now,

When my life trembles on the top of fate,
And all my days hang from this edge
of time

'Twixt night and light suspended,
whence one hour

May hurl all hopes down breathless to
the pit,

And cast me broken at the mountain's
foot,

Or set me sure and steadfast in the sun,
To be so crossed of cozening honesties,
And honors made of craft, and fraudu-
lent faith,

Would spur a blood more sluggish than
my sleep

And prick a drowsier passion. Well,
let be:

Our time will come to take all these in
hand.

What may doubt deem, then, I would
do with him,

That am his mother? Nay, I know
their thought:

It is their fear and hatred of my lord
That glares askant on me; and the
child's self,

I think, as little loves me as he need,
Knowing in what love I held his father.

Come,

I will yet see, before I take my leave,
If there be such a nature in our blood
As can command and change the spirit-
ual springs

And motions of our thought, advance
or check

The pulse of purpose in the soul that
moves

Our longings and our loathings to their
end

By mere control and force unreasonable
Of motiveless compulsion; if such blind

And sensual chances of the stirring
veins

That feed the heart of child or mother
may

Divert and dull the mind's design, or
turn

The conscience and the current of the
will

From its full course and action. I
believe,

Albeit I would not hurt the life I bare,
Nor shed its blood, it is not possible

Such love should live between my child
and me,

Who know what source he came of
more than mine,

And how that part of me once mixed
therewith

Was sullied thence and shamed in
mine own sight,

That loathes to look upon it, yet must
see

In flesh and blood the record writ and
sealed

As oft as I behold him: and you saw
He would not lie within mine arm, nor

kiss,

But like a fox-cub scratched and strove,
to be

Free of my hands again.

Mary Beaton. I see no need

In heaven or earth why you should love
him.

Queen. No?

They say such law there is to enforce
such love

On either part: I know not; but I
think

Love should but flower from seed of
love, and this

Was but a tare sown timeless and in
hate;

Yet so much am I mother in my mind,
That, be it for love or loathing, from

my heart,

When I perforce commend him to that
care

Which will not yield him naturally to
mine,

Fain would I parting know if soon or
late

Mine eyes shall turn upon that face
again

Which out of me was moulded, and
 take note,
 When each on each looks equal-eyed,
 and sees
 His crown a shadow that makes mine
 a shade,
 What king must this be, and what
 queen shall I.

SCENE VIII.—DUNBAR. A ROOM
 IN THE CASTLE.

MAITLAND and SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Melville. What, have you seen them
 since we came from horse?

How looks she now?

Maitland. Disquieted and strange;
 And he so hot and high of mood, I
 think

We have no safeguard from him but in
 her;

And Huntley that at Stirling spake with
 me

Of this their counsel, and must now
 suspect

It was by me discovered to the lords,
 Will turn perforce his fear of Both-
 well's wrath

Into a sword to strike as straight as he
 Even at my life, it may be; which her
 grace

Shall easilier from fear of them redeem
 Than her own fame from evidence of
 men,

That seeing her prisoner see too if she
 came

By force or no, and led by heart or
 hand,

To bonds indeed or freedom.

Melville. Nay, myself
 Was warned of him that rode in charge
 of me,—

The laird here of Blackadder,—how
 lord

Was of our lady's counsel; and but now
 As they rode in I heard him swear, and
 laugh,

Who would soe'er or would not, in
 their spite,

Yea, though herself she would not with
 her will,

Yet should the queen perforce now wed
 with him.

Maitland. The deed has flushed his
 brain and blood like wine:

He is wroth and merry at once, as a
 man mad.

There will no good come of it.

Melville. Surely, sir,
 Of such loose crafts there cannot: all
 this land

Will cry more loud upon her than on
 him

If she be known consenting.

Maitland. If she be!
 How shall not all ears know it on earth
 that hear?

But two miles out of Edinburgh, at
 noon,

Accompanied of all her guard and us,
 She, meeting in mid-road at Almond
 Bridge,

The unthought-on Bothwell at his horse-
 troop's head,

Who with twelve men lays hand upon
 her rein,

Yields herself to him for fear our blood
 be spilt,

Or theirs or ours, for tenderness of
 heart

Submits her to his violent masterdom,
 Forbids our swords, ties up all hands
 with words,

And doglike follows hither at his hand
 For pure surprise and suddenness of
 fear

That plucks the heart out of resistance;
 then,

Riding beneath the south wall of the
 town,

On show of summons to the castle sent
 For help of us enforced thus of our
 foes,

We get but fire of guns charged full of
 sound

With hay stuffed in for powder; and
 God knows

Balfour knew naught of this, the gov-
 ernor,

Who was forewarned not first of their
 design,

How by no means to cross but further
 it

With forecast of his office; nay, all this
 Was undevise'd, and on the sudden
 wrought

To take her by swift stroke of simple hand;

And so astonied were we all, and so
The castellan, and most of all the queen.

Why, though the world be drunk with faith in lies,

Shall God make this too gospel? From this day

Shall she begin her ruin; with rent heart

I see the ways wherethrough her life shall lie,

And to what end; for never henceforth more

Shall she get good or comfort of men's love,

Nor power nor honor that a queen should have,

Nor hap nor hope renewed in all her days.

She has killed herself to take her kingdom off,

And give into strange keeping.

Enter the QUEEN, BOTHWELL, and HUNTLEY.

Bothwell. Here he stands, —

This was the knave that was to baffle me:

He shall die here.

Huntley. I will not lose the part
My sword should have in him: this hour and hand

Shall cut off craft and danger. Stand, and die.

Maitland. Is it the queen's will that pursues my life?

Then let it strike, and end.

Queen. I charge you, hold!
I will not foully twice be forced of men
To stand and stain mine eyes with sight of blood

Shed of a friend, and guiltless. Hold, I say!

Bothwell. Stand by, for I will slay him.

Queen. Slay me, then,
For I will fling my body on their points
Before your swords shall find him.

Hark you, sir, [*To HUNTLEY.*]
Whose father died my traitor in my sight:

If one hair perish of my servant's head,

You that had back your lands and goods but now

Again shall lose them with your forfeit life

For boot of this man's blood.

Bothwell. Woman, give way!

Queen. Give all your swords way toward me; let me bleed

Ere this my friend that has been true to me:

I swear he shall not.

Maitland. Madam, for God's love,
Come you not in their peril; I am armed,

If both not run upon me.

Bothwell. Fool, I say,
Give place, or I shall know not what I do;

Make me not mad.

Queen. I cannot fear you yet.

Will you strike now?

Bothwell. I should but do you right.
Why thrust you in between me and this man

Whom your heart knows for traitor,
and whose tongue

Crossed and betrayed our counsel to the lords?

Had he his will, we should not stand to-day

Here heart to heart, but you in ward of them,

And I divided from you.

Queen. My sweet lord,
Let not your wrath confound my happiness;

Stain not my fair and fortunate hour with blood

Shed of a good man who shall serve us yet.

It shall more help to have him live our friend

Than fifty-fold slain of our enemies.

Bothwell. Have your will's way; he cannot cross us now;

I care not if he live.

Maitland. I am bounden to you
For so much grace.

Queen. Vex not his mood again.

To-morrow shall all friends be reconciled;

To-night rest here in surety.

Bothwell. Be it so. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX. — THE SAME.

The QUEEN, BOTHWELL, and the ARCHBISHOP of ST. ANDREW'S.

Queen. What counsel, father? if their league be made
So soon and strong at Stirling, we had need

Surely by this be fast in Edinburgh.
We have sent thither freely as our friends

Lord Huntley and James Melville, who were here

As in our ward, not prisoners; every day

Here lingering makes our enemies biterer-tongued

And our strange state more hazardous; myself

More taxed for willing bondage, or my lord

For violence done upon me.

Archbishop. In my mind,
There is no mean of policy now but speed,

Nor surety but short counsel and stout heart.

The lords at Stirling, while you put off time,

Athol and Mar, and Morton with Argyle,

Are sworn to crown the prince, and of his name

Make to their cause a standard, if you cleave

Still to my lord here, from whose violent hand

With your own leave they fain would pluck you forth,

And keep your honor hurtless; but they see

You will have no deliverance at their hands

From him who, as they say, doth boast himself,

If he may get your child once in his ward,

To warrant him forever in good time
From all revenging of his father's death.

Nay, it is bruited of them all about
How you at parting would have given

the boy

An apple poisoned, which he put away,
And dogs that ate it after swelled and died.

Bothwell. The devil is in their lips
had I free way,
Fire should seal up and sear them.

Archbishop. So they talk;
The very children's tongues are hot on you,

And in their plays your shadowy action staged

And phantoms raised of your presented deed:

Boys that in Stirling streets had made their game

To act again the slaying of Darnley, so
Were rapt with passion of the pastime feigned

They well-nigh slew the player that took on him

Your part, my lord, as murderer, and came off

Half hanged indeed and breathless; this I hear,

And more much weightier daily from that part

Pointing the same way on you; sure it is,

From France and England messengers desire

To have the prince delivered to their charge

As to be fostered for his surety's sake
Of one or other, safer so bestowed

In foreign harborage of a stranger court

Than at the rough breast of his natural land;

Such offer comes there of Elizabeth
To those unquiet lords, but other aid

They must of her not look for to their part

Who stand against their sovereign.
Now, since these

Are dangers evident, and every day
Puts more in them of dangerous, best

it were,
I think, to meet them warlike point to

point,
Your hands and powers made one, and multiplied

By mutual force and faith; or you must part,

And each lose other, and yet be neither
 saved,
 Or presently with one sole face confront
 The many-mouthed new menace of the
 time,
 With divers heads deformed of enmi-
 ties
 That roar and ravin in the night of
 state
 Made dim with factions; only majesty,
 With light of bared and kindled brows
 and eyes,
 Can face them to consume; do you but
 show
 Your soul as high as is your crown,
 and power
 As plain as is your cause, you shall en-
 force,
 By resolution and a forthright will,
 The obedience and the allowance of
 these men
 That would constrain you by the fear
 of them
 Within the limit of their leave. I say,
 Proclaim at once the fore-ordained di-
 vorce
 Between his sometime lady and my
 lord,
 And hard thereon your marriage, as
 compelled
 By perilous instance of necessity
 At once to assure you of a husband's
 help
 And present strength in this your need,
 who stand
 Fenceless and forceless with no man
 for stay,
 And could desire none truer and wor-
 thier trust
 Than him whose service done and val-
 iant name
 May warrant your remission of such
 fault
 As men lay on him for the seeming
 force
 With which unwillingly he stood con-
 strained
 To save you even for love's sake from
 their hands,
 Whence, had not he redeemed you as
 by might,
 They had done you worse wrong than
 he seemed to do.

This shall excuse the speed that you
 put on,
 And leave their hands no time to rise
 that would
 Prevent you, being unmarried; and
 your own,
 Forestalling them, shall take again and
 steer
 The helm of this land's general weal,
 else left
 To their cross guidance and false pilot-
 age.
Bothwell. By God, well said and
 counselled.
Queen. All is well,
 Or shall, if but one thing be; and in
 you
 That lies alone of all men. Nay, you
 know it:
 Wrong me not now to ask.
Bothwell. Wrong you not me,
 To cross my wit with riddles, which you
 know
 From no man's lips I love.
Queen. I know not yet
 If there be naught on any lips that live
 Save mine that you love better: I can
 tell
 Too little of your likings.
Bothwell. Be not wroth
 That thus much of them I desire you
 learn,
 And set your heart to it, once being
 schooled. Fair queen,
 These are no chambering times, nor sit
 we here
 To sing love's catches counter-changed
 with words
 That cross and break in kisses: what
 you will,
 Be swift to speak, or silent.
Queen. What I will?
 I will be sure there hangs about your
 heart
 No thought that bound it once to one
 cut off
 And yet may feed it with desire to share
 What is my treasure and my right to
 have
 With her most undeserving; which in
 you
 Were more than Jason's falsehood was,
 that gave

To his new wife such vantage of his old
 As you give her of me, whose narrower
 heart
 Holds not a third part of the faith and
 love
 That my obedience bears you, though
 she wear
 Against my will such vantage in your
 sight,
 By my hard hap; yet would I think
 not so,
 Nor liken you to such a trustless man
 And miserable as he was, nor myself
 To one so wronged a woman, and being
 wronged
 In suffering so unpitiful as she.
 Yet you put in me somewhat of her
 kind
 That makes me like unto her in any
 thing
 That touches you or may preserve you
 mine
 To whom alone you appertain, if that
 May be called mine by right appropri-
 ated
 Which should be won through faithful
 travail, yea,
 'Through only loving of you as God
 knows
 I do and shall do all my days of life
 For pain or evil that can come thereof:
 In recompense of which, and all those
 ills
 You have been cause of to me, and
 must think
 That I esteem no evils for your sake,
 Let not this woman with her heartless
 tears
 Nor piteous passion thrust me out of
 door,
 Who should sit sole and secret in your
 heart.
 What hath she borne, or I not borne,
 for you,
 And would not bear again? or by what
 gift
 Have I set store or spared it that might
 go
 To buy your heart's love to me? Have
 I found
 Empire, or love of friends, or pride, or
 peace,
 Or honor, or safe life, or innocence,

Too good things to put from me; or
 men's wrath,
 Terror or shame or hatred of mine
 own,
 Or breach of friends, or kingdom's
 wreck, or sin,
 Too fearful things to embrace and make
 them mine
 With as good will and joyous height of
 heart
 As hers who takes love in her prosper-
 ous arms
 And has delight to bridegroom? Have
 I not
 Loved all these for your sake? and
 those good things,
 Have I not all abhorred them? Would
 I keep
 One comfort or one harbor or one hope,
 One ransom, one resource, one resting-
 place,
 That might divide me from your dan-
 ger, save
 This head whose crown is humbled at
 your foot
 From storm that smote on yours?
 Would I sleep warm
 Out of the wind's way when your sail
 was set
 By night against the sea-breach!
 Would I wait
 As might your wife to hear of you, how
 went
 The day that saw your battle, and hold
 off
 Till the cry came of fallen or conquer-
 ing men
 To bid me mourn or triumph? Hath
 my heart
 Place for one good thought bred not of
 your good,
 Or ill thought not depending on your
 ill?
 What hath she done, that yours hath
 place for her,
 Or time or thought or pity?
Bothwell. What have I,
 That yours should fix on her untimely?
 Nay,
 Last year she was my wife, and moved
 you not;
 And now she is turned forth naked of
 that name,

And stripped as 'twere to clothe you,
comes this heat,
And fear takes fire lest she turn back,
or I
To thrust you forth instead: you are
fair and fool
Beyond all queens and women.
Queen. There spake truth,
For then you said, most loving. But
indeed
This irks me yet, this galls with doubt
and fear,
That even her plea to be divorced from
you
On some forepast adulterous charge, —
which proved
She wins her asking, — leaves your hand
not loose
By law to wed again, but your same
deed
Frees her from you, and fetters you
from me.
Then stand we shamed and profitless:
meseems
God's very hand can loose not us and
join,
Who binds and looses; though Buc-
cleuch make oath
She was contracted to you first, and
this
No righteous marriage; though she
plight her soul
As she made proffer for our hope's
sake; yea,
Though you should bring a hundred
loves to swear
They had the firstlings of your faith,
who kept
No faith with any, nor will keep with
me,
God knows, and I, that have no war-
rant yet
In my lord's word here which unweds
you, being
Matched with your cousin in the fourth
degree,
And no proof published if the Church's
grace
Were granted for it, or sought; no help
of this,
If your love give not warrant; and
therein
If she hath half or I have less than all,

Then have I nothing of you. — Speak
to him:
Bid him not break his faith, not this
now mine;
Plead for me with him, father, lest he
lie,
And I too lose him: God shall pardon,
say,
What sin we do for love, or what for
wrath,
Or to defend us from the danger of
men,
But to me, — me, say, if he be forsworn,
That God shall forgive it him, nor I.
Archbishop. Be not too careful to
confound yourself.
Those bonds are broken by God's leave
and law:
Make no fresh bonds of your own
fears, to do
What harm these do no more; he hath
put her off:
Rest there content.
Queen. Nay, why should I then trust
He shall not put off me in heart for
her?
Bothwell. Why, have your choice
then, and mistrust: God's death!
I had deemed I had learnt of women's
witlessness
Some little learning, yet I thought no
more
Than that it was but light as air, snow,
foam,
And all things light, not lighter. I
would know
What men hold foolish yet that hold
you wise,
If not your fear.
Queen. Doth she not love you?
Bothwell. Ay.
Queen. Hath she not cause to hate,
and doth not hate,
Who sues to be put from you, for your
fault
Craves leave to be cut off, as I crave
leave
To take you from her hands, her gift?
Bothwell. God knows:
She may love, hate, or hate not neither
love,
Or both alike: I know not.
Queen. But I know

That you can love not. Nay, then help me, God!

If I did know this, I would kill myself. Yet to more proof I would I had put your heart,

Ere I gave up to it all the might of mine —

Which is but feebleness. Well, we will go;

There is no better counsel. Pardon me If my fear seem to wrangle with my faith:

They are parts but of my love, that with itself

Strives to be master of its grief and joy

Lest either overbear it, and therewith Put out my life. Come: all things shall be well.

SCENE X. — HOLYROOD.

Enter HERRIES and SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Herries. Is the work done?

Melville. They are wedded fast; and now

I think would one of them to free herself

Give the right hand she hath given him.

Herries. What, so soon?

Came she as loath into the council-hall, Or were her answers as compelled and strange?

Melville. I have not seen for any chance till now

So changed a woman in the face as she, Saving with extreme sickness. She was wed

In her old mourning habits, and her face

As deadly as were they; the soft warm joy

That laughed in its fair feature, and put heart

In the eyes and gracious lips as to salute

All others' eyes with sweet regardfulness,

Looked as when winds have worn the white-rose leaf;

No fire between her eyelids, and no flower

In the April of her cheeks; their spring a-cold,

And but for want of very heart to weep They had been rainier than they were forlorn.

Herries. And his new grace of Orkney?

Melville. The good duke

Was dumb while Adam Bothwell with grave lips

Set forth the scandal of his lewd life past

And fair faith of his present penitence. Whose days to come being higher than

his past place Should expiate those gone by, and their good works

Atone those evil: hardly twitched his eye,

Or twinkled half his thick lip's curve of hair,

Listening; but when the bishop made indeed

His large hard hand with hers so flower-like fast,

He seemed as 'twere for pride and mighty heart

To swell and shine with passion, and his eye

To take into the fire of its red look All dangers and all adverse things that might

Rise out of days unrisen, to burn them up

With its great heat of triumph; and the hand

Fastening on hers so griped it that her lips

Trembled, and turned to catch the smile from his,

As though her spirit had put its own life off,

And sense of joy or property of pain, To close with his alone; but this twin smile

Was briefer than a flash or gust that strikes

And is not; for the next word was not said

Ere her face waned again to winter ward

As a moon smitten, and her answer came

As words from dead men wickedly
wrung forth

By craft of wizards, forged and forceful
breath

Which hangs on lips that loathe it.

Herries. Will you think

This was not haply but for show, to
wear

The likeness as of one not all con-
strained

Nor all consenting, willingly enforced

To do her will as of necessity?

That she might seem no part yet of his
plot,

But as compelled by counsel of those
lords

Who since her coming have subscribed
by name

The paper of advice that in his cause
Declares what force of friends has
Bothwell here

In Lothian and on all the border's
march

To keep good order, and how well it
were

She should for surety wed him whom
she needs

Must wed for honor, or perforce live
shamed

By violence done upon her.

Melville. No: there hung

Too much of fear and passion on her
face

To be put off when time shall be to
unmask.

The fire that moved her, and the mount-
ing will,

While danger was and battle was to be,
Now she hath leapt into the pit alive

To win and wear the diamond, are no
more:

Hope feels the wounds upon its hands
and feet

That clomb and clung, now halting
since the hour

That should have crowned has bruised
it. No, 'tis truth:

She is heart-struck now, and labors
with herself,

As one that loves, and trusts not but
the man

Who makes so little of men's hate may
make

Of women's love as little; with this
doubt

New-born within her, fears that slept
awake,

And shame's eyes open that were shut
for love,

To see on earth all pity hurt to death

By her own hand, and no man's face
her friend

If his be none for whom she casts them
off,

And finds no strength against him in
their hands.

Herries. Small strength indeed, or
help of craft or force,

Must she now look for of them; and
shall find,

I fear, no stay against men's spirits and
tongues,

Nor shelter in the observance of their
will

That she puts on, submitting her own
faith

To the outward face of theirs, as in
this act

Of marriage, and the judgment now
enforced

Against the allowance of the mass, albeit
With a bruised heart and loathing did
she bow

That royal head and hand imperious
once

To give so much of her soul's trust
away;

And little shall it stead her.

Melville. So fear I:

'Tis not the warrant of an act affirmed
Against the remnants of her faith, nor

form

Of this strange wedlock, shall renew to
her

Men's outworn love and service; nay,
and strife

Lies closer to her than fears from out-
ward: these

Whose swords and souls attend on her
new lord,

Both now for fault of pay grown
mutinous,

From flat revolt they hardly have re-
deemed

With the queen's jewels and that Eng-
lish gift

Of the gold font sent hither for the prince,
 That served him not for christening, melted now
 To feed base hands with gold, and stop loud throats,
 Whose strength alone and clamor put such heart
 In Bothwell, that he swore to hang the man
 Who would not speak their banns at first, and now
 But utters them with lips that yet protest
 Of innocent blood and of adulterous bonds
 By force proclaimed, and fraudulent; and this Craig
 The townsmen love, and heed not that for craft
 Each day will Bothwell hear men preach, and show
 To them that speak all favor, and will sit
 A guest at burghers' boards unsummoned; yet
 Men's hate more swells against him, to behold
 How by the queen he rides unbonneted, And she rebukes his too much courtesy;
 So that their world within doors and without
 Swells round them doubtfully toward storm, and sees
 This hot-brained helmsman in his own conceit
 Even here in port, who drifts indeed at sea.
Herries. Short time will wind this up: the secretary,
 Whose blood the queen would see not shed of him,
 Is slipped away for Stirling, there to join
 With Lindsay and the lords ere this combined,
 From whom I may not now divide myself,
 On the child's party. Not a hand will stay
 Nor heart upon this side; the Hamiltons,
 For their own ends that set this marriage on,

Will for those ends with no sad hearts behold
 At others' hands her imminent overthrow.
Melville. This was the archbishop's counsel, that annulled
 Last year's true marriage to procure the queen's,
 And even therein betray her. God mend all!
 But I misdoubt me lest the sun be set
 That looked upon the last of her good days.

SCENE XI. — THE SAME.

The QUEEN and BOTHWELL; MARY BEATON and ARTHUR ERSKINE in attendance.

Queen. Are you yet wroth?
Bothwell. Are you yet wise? to know
 If I be wroth, should less import than this
 Which I would fain find of you.
Queen. By my life,
 I think I am but wise enough to know
 That witless I was ever.
Bothwell. Ay, but most,
 You mean, to wed me, that am graceless more
 Than witless you that wedded, in men's eyes
 Who justliest judge of either; yet, by God,
 Had I not grace enough to match with you,
 I must have less than in their minds I have
 And tongues of them that curse me.
 But what grief
 Wrings now your heart or whets your tongue, that strikes
 When the heart stirs not?
Queen. Nay, no grief it is
 To be cut off from all men's company,
 Watched like a thief lest he break ward by night,
 My chamber-door set round with men at-arms,
 My steps and looks espied on, hands and feet
 Fettered as 'twere with glances of strange eyes

That guard me lest I stray; my ways,
my words,
My very sleep, their subject.

Bothwell. You were wont
To walk more free; I wot you have
seen fair days
When you lived large i' the sun, and
had sweet tongues
To sing with yours, and haply lips and
eyes
To make song sweeter than the lute
may: now

'Tis hard that you sit here my woful
wife,
Who use you thus despitefully, that
yet

Was never queen so mated with a
groom

And so mishandled: have you said so?

Queen. I?

Bothwell. Who hath put these words
else in men's mouths, that prate
How you lie fast in prison? I did know
A woman's tongue keen as her faith
was light,
But faith so like the wind spake never
yet

With tongue so like a sword's point.

Queen. No, my lord?

'Tis well that I should hear so first of
you,
Who best may know the truth of your
worst word.

Bothwell. Is it no truth that men so
speak, and you,
By speech or silence or by change of
face,
By piteous eyes or angry, give them
cause

To babble of your bonds? What
grace you show

Toward others is as doubt and hate of
me

In these our enemies' sight, who see it,
and swear

You are kept in ward here of my will,
and made,

Out of no trust or love but force and
fear,

Thralld to my hand. Why, being but
two days wed,

Must there be cause between us of dis-
pute

For such a thing as this man, in whose
name

I am crossed and slighted of your wan-
ton will?

Queen. If he be worth no more than
you conceive,

What grace I do him can hurt you?

Bothwell. I conceive!

Why, what worth is he with you, that I
should

Conceive the least thought of him?
Were I hurt,

Assure yourself it would be to his
death:

Lay that much to your heart.

Queen. My heart is killed.

I have not where to lay it.

Bothwell. Pray you, no tears.

I have seen you weep when dead men
were alive,

That for your eye-drops wept their
hearts' blood out:

So will not I. You have done me fool-
ish wrong,

And haply cast your fame for food to
hounds

Whose teeth will strip it hour by hour
more bare

Whereon they have gnawed before.

Queen. What have I done?

Speak.

Bothwell. Nay, I will, because you
know not. Hark:

You are even too simple and harmless;
being man's wife,

Not now the first time, you should buy
more wit

Though with less innocence; you have
given a gift,

Out of your maiden singleness of soul
And eye most witless of misconstruing

eyes,
Where you should not: this is strange

truth to you,
But truth, God help us! that man's

horse who was
Your husband, and whose chattels,

place, and name
Lie in my hold I think now lawfully,

Whence none is like to wring them,
have you given

Out of my hand to one of whom fame
saith

That by the witness of a north-land
 witch
 He when I die must wed you, and my
 life
 Shall last not half a year; for in your
 bed
 Must lie two husbands after me, and
 you
 Shall in your fifth lord's lifetime die by
 fire.
 Now, being but third and least in worth
 of these,
 I would not have you die so red a death,
 But keep you from all fresh or fiercer
 heat
 Than of my lips and arms; for which
 things' sake
 I am not blithe, so please you, to behold
 How straight this lay lord abbot of
 Arbroath
 Sits in your husband's saddle. Pardon
 me
 That with my jealous knowledge I con-
 found
 Your virginal sweet ignorance of men's
 minds,
 Ill thoughts and tongues unmannerly,
 that strike
 At the pure heart which dreams not on
 such harm:
 It is my love and care of your life's
 peace
 Makes me thus venturous to wage
 words with you,
 And put such troublous things in your
 fair mind,
 Whereof God wot you knew not; and
 to end,
 Take this much of me: live what life
 you may,
 Or die what death, while I have part
 in you,
 None shall have part with me; nor
 touch nor word,
 Nor eye nor hand, nor writing, nor one
 thought,
 The lightest that may hang upon a look,
 Shall man get of you that I know not
 of,
 And answer not upon him. Be you
 sure
 I am not of such fool's mould cast in
 flesh

As royal-blooded husbands; being no
 king,
 Nor kin of kings, but one that keep
 unarmed
 My head but with my hand, and have
 no wit
 To twitch you strings, and match you
 rhyme for rhyme,
 And turn and twitter on a tripping
 tongue,
 But so much wit to make my word and
 sword
 Keep time and rhyme together, say and
 slay.
 Set this down in such record as you list,
 But keep it surer than you keep your
 mind
 If that be changing; for by heaven and
 hell
 I swear to keep the word I give you
 fast
 As faith can hold it, that who thwarts
 me here,
 Or comes across my will's way in my
 wife's,
 Dies as a dog dies, doomless. Now,
 your pleasure:
 I prate no more.
Queen. Shall I be handled thus?
Bothwell. You have too much been
 handled otherwise:
 Now will I keep you from men's hands
 in mine,
 Or lack the use of these.
Queen. What, to strike me?
 You shall not need: give me a knife to
 strike,
 That I may let my life out in his eye,
 Or I will drown myself.
Bothwell. Why, choose again:
 I cross you not.
Queen. Give me a knife, I say.
Arthur Erskine. Make not our hearts
 bleed, madam, as they burn
 To hear what we hear silent.
Bothwell. Comfort her:
 You were her chamber-knight on
 David's day.
Arthur Erskine. My lord, the re-
 verence that the queen's sight
 bears,
 And awe toward her, make me thus
 slow to set

My hand to do what work my heart
bids; else

I would not doubt to stand before your
grace,

And make such answer as her servant
may.

Queen. Forbear him, Arthur: nay,
and me; 'tis I

On whom all strokes first fall and sorest
smite,

Who most of all am shieldless, without
stay,

And look for no man's comfort. — Pray
you, sir,

If it be in your will that I cast off
This heavy life to lighten your life's

load
That now with mine is laden, let me

die
More queenlike than this dog's death
you denounce

Against the man that falls into your
hate;

Though not for love, yet shame, be-
cause I was

A queen that loved you: else you
should not seem

So royal in her sight whose eyes you
serve,

Nor she when I am dead with such
high heart

Behold you, nor with such glad lips
commend

As conqueror of me slain for her love's
sake

And servant of her living in your love.
Let me die therefore queenlike, and

your sword
Strike where your tongue hath struck;

though not so deep,
It shall suffice to cleave my heart and

end.

Bothwell. Hear you, my queen: if we
twain be one flesh,

I will not have this daintier part of it
Turn any timeless hand against itself

To hurt me, nor this fire which is your
tongue

Shoot any flame on me: no fuel am I
To burn and feed you; not a spark you

shed
Shall kindle me to ruin, but with my
foot

Rather will I tread out the light that
was

A firebrand for the death of many a
man

To light the pile whereon they burnt
alive.

What! have I taken it in my hand to
scorch

And not to light me? or hath it set
fire

To so few lives already, that who bears
Needs not to watch it warily and wake

When the night falls about him? Nay,
the man

Were twice the fool that these your
dead men were,

Who seeing as I have seen and in his
hand

Holding the fire I carry through the
dark

To be the beacon of my travelling days,
And shine upon them ended, should

not walk
With feet and eyes both heedful at

what hour,
By what light's leading, on what ground

he goes,
And toward what end. Be therefore

you content
To keep your flame's heat for your ere-

mies' bale,
And for your friend that large and lib-

eral light
That gave itself too freely, shot too

far,
Till it was closed as in a lantern up

To make my path plain to me; which
once lost,

The light goes out forever.

Queen. Yea, I know;
My life can be but light now to your

life,
And of no service else; or, if none

there,
Even as you say, must needs be

quenched; and would
The wind that now beats on it and the

sea
Had quenched it ere your breath, and

I gone out
With no man's blood behind me!

Bothwell. Come, be wise:
Our sun is not yet sunken.

Queen. No, not yet:
The sky might even wax redder than it
is
When that shall sink; darkness and
smoke of hell,
Clouds that rain blood, and blast of
winds that wreck,
Shall be about it setting.

Bothwell. What! your heart
Fails you now first that shrank not
when a man's

Might well at need have failed him?

Queen. Ay, and no;
It is the heart that fired me, fails my
heart;

And as that bows beneath it, so doth
mine

Bend, and will break so surely.

Bothwell. Nay, not mine:
There is not weight yet on our adverse
part,

Fear not, to bend it.

Queen. Yet it fails me now.
I have leant too much my whole life's
weight on it

With all my soul's strength, and be-
neath the fraught

I hear it split and sunder. Let me
rest:

I would fain sleep a space now. Who
goes there?

Mary Beaton. A suitor to behold
your majesty.

Queen. I will not see him. Who
should make suit to me?

Who moves yet in this world so miser-
able

That I can comfort? or what hand so
weak

It should be now my suppliant, or up-
lift

In prayer for help's sake to lay hold on
mine?

What am I to give aid or alms, who
have

Nor alms nor aid at hand of them to
whom

I gave not some but all part of myself?
I will not see him.

Mary Beaton. It is a woman.

Queen. Ay?

But yet I think no queen; and cannot
be

But therefore happier and more strong
than I.

Yet I will see what woman's face for
grief

Comes to seek help at mine; if she be
mad,

Me may she teach to lose my wits and
woes,

And live more enviable than ye that yet
Have wit to know me wretched.

Enter JANE GORDON.

Who is this?

Are you my suitor?

Jane Gordon. I am she that was
Countess of Bothwell: now my name
again

Is that my father gave me.

Queen. Ay, no more;
You are daughter yet and sister to
great earls,

And bear that honor blameless; be it
enough;

And tell me wherefore by that name
you come,

And with what suit, before me.

Jane Gordon. Even but this:
To look once on you, and to bid fare-
well,

Ere I fare forth from sight.

Queen. Farewell; and yet
I know not who should in this world
fare well.

Is the word said?

Jane Gordon. A little leave at last
I pray you give me: that I seek it
not

For love or envy toward my sometime
lord,

Or heart toward you disloyal now my
queen,

Let me not plead uncredited. I came
Surely with no good hope to no glad
end,

But with no thought so vile of will as
this,

To thrust between your hearts the care
of me,

Claim right or challenge pity, melt or
fret

Your eyes with forced compassion: I
did think

To have kissed your hand, and some
thing said for sign

I had come not of weak heart or evil
 will,
 But in good faith, to see how strong in
 love
 They stand whose joy makes joyless all
 my life,
 Whose loving leaves it loveless, and
 their wealth
 Feeds full upon my famine. Be not
 wroth:
 I speak not to rebuke you of my want,
 Or of my loss reprove you, that you
 take
 My crown of love to gild your crown
 of gold;
 I know what right you have, and take
 no shame
 To sit for your sake humbled, who
 being born
 A poor mean woman would not less
 have been
 By God's grace royal, and by visible
 seal
 A natural queen of women; but being
 crowned
 You make the throne imperial, and
 your hand
 Puts power into the sceptre; yea, this
 head
 Of its gold circlet takes not majesty,
 But gives it of its own; this may men
 see,
 And I deny not; nor is this but just,
 That I, who have no such honor born
 or given,
 Should have not either, if it please you
 not,
 That which I thought I had; the name
 I wore,
 The hand scarce yet a year since laid
 in mine,
 The eye that burned on mine as on a
 wife's,
 The lip that swore me faith, the heart
 that held
 No thought or throb wherein I had no
 part,
 Or heaved but with a traitor's breath,
 and beat
 With pulse but of a liar.
Bothwell. Ay, swore I so?
 Why, this was truth last year then.
Queen. Truth, my lord?

What does the fire of such a word as
 this
 Between such lips but burn them, as
 mine ears
 Burn that must hear by your device and
 hers
 With what strange flatteries on her
 prompted lips
 This dame unwedded lifts her hand
 unringed
 To abash me with its show of faith,
 and make
 Your wife ashamed at sight of such a
 love
 As yet she bears you that is not your
 wife?
Bothwell. What devil should prick
 me to such empty proof
 And pride unprofitable? I pray you
 think
 I am no such boy to boast of such a
 spoil
 As chamberers make their brag of.
 Let her speak,
 And part not as unfriends.
Queen. Madam, and you
 That thus renumber and resound his
 vows,
 To what good end I know not, in our
 ear, —
 What would you have of him whom
 your own will
 Rose up to plead against as false, to
 break
 His bonds that irked you, and unspeak
 the word
 That held you hand in hand? Did you
 not pray
 To be set free from bondage, and now
 turn
 To question with the hand that you
 put off
 If it did well to loose you?
Jane Gordon. Truly, no;
 Nor will I question with your grace in
 this,
 Whether by mine own will and uncom-
 pelled
 I only would have put that hand away
 That I will say would yet have held
 mine fast
 But for my frowardness and rancorous
 mind;

Let all 'his even be so; as he shall
 say
 Who will say naught but with your
 queenly will,
 Why, so will I. Yet ere I am gone,
 my lord, —
 Oh, not my lord, but hers whose thrall
 am I, —
 My sometime friend and yet not enemy,
 If this thing not offend you, that I
 crave
 So much breath of you as may do me
 right,
 I pray you witness for me how far forth
 And for what love's sake I took part
 with you,
 Or gave consent to our devised divorce,
 And if this were for hate; for you
 should know
 How much of old time I have hated
 you,
 How bitter made my heart, what jeal-
 ous edge
 Set on mine envy toward you: spare
 not then
 To say if out of cold or cankered heart
 I sought, or yielded shamefully for
 spite,
 To be divided from you. Nay, forbear;
 Speak not, nor frown on me; you can-
 not say
 I was your loveless or disloyal wife,
 Or in my void bed on disconsolate
 nights
 Sought comfort but of tears: nor that
 I held
 Mine honor hurt of that which bruised
 my heart,
 And grudged to help you to mine own
 most wrong,
 And lend you mine own hand to smite
 myself,
 And make you by mine own mouth
 quit of me.
 This that I did, and wherefore I did
 this,
 And if for love's or hate's sake, verily
 You shall not say you know not, and
 the queen
 Shall blame me not to put you yet in
 mind,
 Nor think it much that I make record
 here

Of this that was between us: wherefore
 now
 I take no shame at this my leave-taking
 To part as one that has not erred
 herein,
 To love too little; this shall not be said
 When one bethinks him such a woman
 was,
 That with poor spirit or with contracted
 heart
 I gave myself to love you, or was found
 Too mean of mind or sparing of my
 soul
 To cast for love the crown of love
 away,
 And when you bade refuse you for my
 lord,
 Whom, had you bidden, with my
 whole heart's blood
 I had thought not much to purchase
 for my love:
 But seeing nor blood nor all my body's
 tears
 Might buy you back to love me, I was
 fain
 That you should take them and my very
 life
 To buy new love and life with. Sir,
 and now
 Ere we twain part —
Queen. What! are ye parted not?
 Between his lover and my lord I stand,
 And see them weep and wrangle ere
 they part,
 And hold my peace for pity!
Jane Gordon. God shall judge
 If with pure heart and patience, or
 with soul
 That burns and pines, I would have
 said farewell:
 I crave but this much of your grace
 and God's, —
 Make me at last not angry.
Queen. Have you held
 No counsel or communion with my lord
 Since — I am shamed that take upon
 my lips
 Such inquisition. If you have aught
 yet, speak;
 I bid not nor forbid you.
Jane Gordon. Naught but this, —
 To unpledge my faith, unlight my
 love, and so

Set on his hand the seal by touch of mine

That sunders us.

Queen. You shall not take his hand.

Jane Gordon. I think not ever then to touch it more,

Nor now desire, who have seen with eyes more sad

More than I thought with sorrowing eyes to see

When I came hither: so this long last time

Farewell, my lord; and you, his queen, farewell. *[Exit.]*

Queen. Hath she made end? *While*

I have part in you,

None shall have part with me; was this my lord,

Was this not you that said so?

Bothwell. Come, enough:

I am bound not to be baited of your tongues.

Queen. Bid her come back.

Bothwell. What! are you foolish? think

You twain shall look in either's eyes no more.

Queen. Why should I look in yours to find her there?

For there she sits as in a mirror shown by the love's light enkindled from your heart,

That flashed but on me like a fen-fire lit To lure me to my grave's edge, whence I fall

Deep as the pit of hell; but yet for shame

Deny not her to me as me to her, Me that have known this ever, but lacked heart

To put the thing to use I knew; and now

For both our sakes who have loved you, play not false

But with one love at once; take up your love

And wear it as a garland in men's sight,

For it becomes you: if you love me not,

You have lied by this enough; speak truth, shake hands,

Loose hearts, and leave me.

Bothwell. Vex not me too long, Vexing your own heart thus with vanity;

Take up your wisdom that you have at will,

And wear it as a sword in danger's sight

That now looks hard upon us. Mine you are,

Love me or love not, trust me not or trust,

As yours am I; and even as I in you, Have faith in me, no less nor further: then

We shall have trust enough on either part

To build a wall about us at whose foot

That sea of iron swayed by winds of war

Shall break in foam like blood; and hurled once back,

The hearts and swords of all our enemies fallen

Lie where they fell forever. Know but this,

And care not what is unknown else: we twain

Have wrought not out this fortune that we have,

Nor made us way to such an hour and power,

To let men take and break it, while as fools

We kiss and brawl and cry and kiss again,

And wot not when they smite. For these next days,

We will behold the triumph held at Leith

And pageant of a sea-fight as set forth With open face and spirit of joyous-

ness,

To fix this faith in all men's eyes and minds,

That while life lives we stand indissoluble:

Then shall you send out for your child again

Forth of Lord Mar's good keeping, that your heart

May here have comfort in his present sight;

So shall all these who make his name
 their sword
 Lie weaponless within our hand and
 hold,
 Who are drawn in one against us, or
 prepare,
 While we delay, for Stirling; where by
 this,
 I am certified on faith of trusty men,
 Argyle is met with Morton, our good
 friends
 That served us for their turn, with some
 that helped
 To make our match and some that
 would have marred,
 Once several-souled, now in their envies
 one,
 As Lindsay, Athol, Herries; and to
 these
 Maitland is fled, your friend that must
 not bleed,
 Your counsellor is stolen away and
 lives
 To whet his wit against you; but my-
 self,
 When we have shown us to the people,
 and seen
 What eye they turn upon our marriage
 feast,
 Will ride to Melrose, and raise up from
 sleep
 Their hardy hearts whom now mine
 unfriends there
 Hold in subjection; Herries nor Lord
 Hume
 Nor Maxwell shall have power to tie
 them up
 When I shall bid them forth, and all
 the march
 Shall rise beneath us as with swell
 o' the sea
 And wash of thickening waters when
 the wind
 Makes the sea's heart leap with such
 might of joy
 As hurls its waves together; there shall
 we
 Ride on their backs as warriors, and
 our ship
 Dance high toward harbor. Put but
 on the spirit
 You had in all times that beset your
 peace,

Since you came home, with danger; in
 those wars
 That made the first years clamorous of
 your reign,
 And in this past and perilous year of
 ours
 Where you lacked never heart. Be
 seen again
 The royal thing men saw you; these
 your friends
 Shall look more friendly on our wedded
 faith
 Seeing no more discord of our days
 to be,
 And our bold borderers with one heart
 on fire
 Burn in your warlike safeguard, once to
 strike
 And end all enemies' quarrel. When
 we part,
 At Borthwick Castle shall you look for
 me,
 Where I will gather friends more fain
 of fight
 Than all our foes may muster.
Queen. Sir, so be it;
 But now my heart is lower than once it
 was,
 And will not sit, I think, again so high,
 Though my days turn more prosperous
 than I deem.
 But let that be. — Come, friends, and
 look not sad
 Though I look sadder; make what
 cheer we may,
 For festival or fight, or shine or shower,
 I will not fail you yet. God give me
 heart,
 That never so much lacked it! yea, he
 shall,
 Or I will make it out of mine own
 fears,
 And with my feebleness increase my
 force,
 And build my hope the higher that joy
 lies low
 Till all be lost and won. — Lead you,
 my lord,
 And fear not but I follow: I have wept
 When I should laugh, and laughed
 when I should weep,
 And now live humbler than I thought
 to be;

I ask not of your love, but of mine own
I have yet left to give. Come, we will
see

These pageants or these enemies; my
heart

Shall look alike on either. Be not
wroth;

I will be merry while I live, and die
When I have leave. My spirit is sick :
would God

We were now met at Borthwick, with
men's spears

And noise of friends about us; friend
or foe,

I care not whether; here I am sore at
heart,

As one that cannot wholly wake nor
sleep

Till death receive or life reprieve me.
Come;

We should be glad now: let the world
take note

We are glad in spite and sight of enmi-
ties

That are but worth the hour they take
to quell.

SCENE XII. — STIRLING CASTLE.

MAITLAND and LINDSAY.

Lindsay. Is there such breach be-
tween them? why, men said,
When they would ride through Edin-
burgh, and he
Bareheaded at her bridle, she would
take

By force and thrust his cap upon his
head

With loving might and laughing; and
at Leith

They saw the false fight on the waters
join,

And mid-May pageants that shone down
the sun,

As with glad eyes of lovers newly wed
Whose hearts were of the revel; and
so soon

Are hearts and eyes divided?

Maitland. Not an hour
May she draw breath but in his eye,
nor see

But whom he shall give entrance; in
her sight

He thought to have slain me, but she
came between,

And set for shield her bosom to his
sword

In her own chamber: so each day and
night

By violent act or viler word than deed
He turns her eyes to water-springs of
tears,

Who leaves not yet to love him; such
strong hold

By flesh or spirit or either made one fire
Hath such men's love on women made
as she.

For no foul speech, I think, nor strokes
nor shame

Would she go from him, but to keep
him fast

Would burn the world with fire; and
no force less

Shall burn their bonds in sunder.

Lindsay. We will bring
And kindle it in their sight. They are
southward fled

To meet at Borthwick: thither we de-
sign,

To raise the Merse with Hume, and
with Lord Mar

And with the Douglas' following bind
them round,

And take them in one snare, whence
one of these

Shall creep not forth with life or limb
that feels

No hound's fang fasten on it; and his
mate

Shall see their feet smoke with his
slaughtered blood.

SCENE XIII. — BORTHWICK CASTLE.

*The QUEEN and BOTHWELL; MARY
BEATON in attendance.*

Queen. You should be hence again:
since you came in

From Melrose with no levies at your
back,

We have heard no news of friends, and
hear but now

That we are ringed with Morton's folk
about;

How shall he not have laid unhappy
hand

Upon your messenger that bare our
word

Of summons to the archbishop and
your friend

Balfour to be with Huntley at our side?

Bothwell. Ay, he is trapped that bore
my letters hence,

I doubt not; none have feet to run
aright,

Eyes to see true, hands to bring help,
but they

That move them to our ruin. This
Balfour,

Whom I laid trust on since our fiery
night

As on a true man bound of force to me,
Has fallen in conference and device of
plots,

I hear, with that lean limb of policy
That loves me not, James Melville, by
whose mouth

Being warned I meant to take out of
his hand

The castle-keys of Edinburgh, and give
To one my closer kinsman for more
trust.

He has made him friends of ancient
foes, and seeks,

By no less service than pursuit of them
Who slew the king your husband, to
deserve

Their favor who are risen of honest
heart

But to chastise these slayers, of whom
God wot

Themselves were none, nor he that
hunts with them

Upon the trail of treason. Oh, your
lords

Are worthy friends and enemies, and
their tongues

As trusty as their hands are innocent,
When they see time to turn.

Queen. I would their lives

Lay all between my lips, and with one
breath

I might cut all theirs off! nor tongue
nor hand

Should rise of them against us, to deny
Their work disclaimed when done.

What slaves are these

That make their hands red with men's
secret blood,

And with their tongues would lick them
white, and wash

The sanguine grain out with false froth
of words

From lying lips that kissed the dead to
death,

And now cry vengeance for him? But,
my lord,

Make you haste hence to-night ere they
be here

That if we tarry will beset us; I
Should hang but as a fetter on your

foot,

Which should pass free forth to Dun-
bar, and raise

With sound even of its tread and for-
ward speed

The force of all the border.

Bothwell. Where I go,

There shall you not be far to find: to-
night

I will sleep here.

Queen. God give you rest and
strength,

To make that heart which is the lord
of mine

Fresh as the spirit of sunrise! for last
night

You slept not well.

Bothwell. No; I had dreams, that
am

No natural dreamer; I will sleep apart,
With Cranston's son to lie at hand, or

wait

If I lack service.

Queen. Nay, let me be there:

I will not weary you with speech, nor
break

Your sleep with servile and officious
watch,

But sit and keep it as a jewel is kept
That is more dear than eyesight to its

lord,

Or as mine eyes can keep not now their
own,

Now slumber sits far from them. Let
me wake.

Bothwell. No, not with me.

Queen. What, lest I trouble you?
Should my being there put dreams in

you again,

To cross your sleep with me?

Bothwell. Belike it might.

Queen. Nay, I was no part of your dreams, I think;
 You dream not on me waking nor asleep,
 But if you dream on no face else nor mine,
 I will be yet content.
Bothwell. Well, so it was,
 I dreamt at once of either; yet I know not
 Why I should tell my dream. Your lord that was,
 They say, would prattle of his fears by night
 And faces of false peril: I was never
 So loath by day to face what fear I might
 As to be sick in darkness; but this dream
 I would not see again. Yet was it naught;
 I seemed to stand between two gulfs of sea
 On a dark strait of rock, and at my foot
 The ship that bore me broken; and there came
 Out of the waves' breach crying of broken men
 And sound of splintering planks, and all the hull
 Shattered and strewn in pieces; and my head
 Was as my feet and hands, bare, and the storm
 Blew hard with all its heart upon me; then
 Came you, a face with weeping eyes, and hair
 Half glimmering with a broken crown that shone
 Red as of molten iron; but your limbs
 Were swathed about and shrouded out of sight,
 Or shown but as things shapeless that the bier
 Shows ready for the grave; only the head
 Floated, with eyes fast on me, and beneath
 A bloodlike thread dividing the bare throat
 As with a needle's breadth, but all below

Was muffled as with cerecloths; and the eyes
 Wept; then came one we wot of, clad in black,
 And smiling, and laid hands on me more cold
 Than is a snake's kiss or the grave's, and thrust
 Between that severed head, weeping and crowned,
 That mourned upon me, and mine eyes that watched,
 Her own strange head wrapped widow-like and wan
 In habit of one sorrowing, but with lips
 That laughed to kiss me; and there-with at once
 Your face as water flowed out of my sight,
 And on mine own I felt as drops of blood
 Falling, but if your tears they were, or hers,
 Or either's blood, I knew not; on mine eyes
 The great dead night shut doorwise like a wall,
 And in mine ears there sprang a noise of chains,
 And teeth ground hard of prison-grates that jarred
 And split as 'twere with sound my heart, which was
 As ice that cleaves in sunder: for there came
 Through that black breathless air an iron note
 Of locks that shut and sounded, and being dumb
 There left me quick entombed in stone, and hid
 Too deep for the day's eyeshot; then I woke
 With the sea's roaring and the wind's by night
 Fresh in my sense, and on my travail-ing heart
 A weight of walls and floors and upper earth
 That held me down below the breach o' the sea
 Where its tide's wash kept witness overhead

How went the scornful days and nights
 above,
 Where men forgot me, and the living
 sun

As a dead dog passed over.

Queen. What, alone?

She went not with you living under-
 ground

To sit in chains and hear the sea break?
 Nay,

She would not cast you off. This was
 your love, —

Your love of her and need of her sweet
 sight,

That brought her so upon your sleep,
 and made

Your sense so fearful of all things but
 this,

And all else heard and seen so terrible
 But her face only: she should comfort
 you,

Whom I should bring to wreck; why,
 so she said,

Saying how she had loved you whom I
 loved not; yea,

Her eyes were sad, she said, that saw
 forsooth

So little love between us: this sweet
 word,

This word of hers at parting, this it
 was

Of which your dream was fashioned, to
 give sign

How firm she sits and fast yet in your
 heart,

Where I was never.

Bothwell. Well, how be it soe'er,
 I would not dream again this dead
 dream out

For less than kingly waking: so good
 night,

For I will sleep alone.

Queen. No, with my heart,
 That lies down with you though it
 sleeps not. Go,

And dream of no less loving prayer
 than mine

That calls on God for sleep to comfort
 you,

And keep your heart from sense of
 aught more hard

Thau her great love who made it.

[Exit BOTHWELL.]

'Tis a night

That puts our France into my mind:
 even here

By those warm stars a man might call
 it June,

Were such nights many; their same
 flower-bright eyes

Look not more fair on Paris, that mine
 own

Again shall hardly look on. Is it not
 strange

That in this gray land and these griev-
 ous hours

I should so find my spirit and soul
 transformed

And fallen in love with pain, my heart
 that was

Changed and made humble to his love-
 less words

And force as of a master? By my
 faith,

That was till now fixed never, and made
 as fire

To stand a sunlike star in love's live
 heaven, —

A heaven found one in hue and heat
 with hell, —

I had rather be mis-handled as I am
 Of this first man that ever bound me

fast,
 Than worshipped through the world
 with breaking hearts

That gave their blood for worship. I
 am glad

He sometime should misuse me; else I
 think

I had not known if I could love or
 no.

If you could love man with my heart
 as now,

You would not mock nor marvel.
Mary Beaton. No, not then.

Queen. It is not in your heart: there
 lies not power

In you to be for evil end or good
 The strange thing that is I.

Mary Beaton. There does not, no,
 Nor can lie ever: could I love at all,

It were but as mean women, meanly
 so

I do the best to love not.

Queen. Hark! what noise?

Look forth and see.

Mary Beaton. A sound of men and steeds;

The ring is round us; hark, the cry of Hume,

There Lindsay, and there Mar!

Queen. Call up my lord:

I will not go to vex him; but do you Haste and awake them.

[*Exit MARY BEATON.*

Be it not in mine eyes

That he first sees death risen upon his sleep,

If we must die; being started out of rest,

If he should curse me, were my heart not slain

With the opening of his eyes in wrath on mine?

Re-enter MARY BEATON.

Mary Beaton. My lord is raised and fled; but in the press

The lord of Cranston's son that slept with him

Is fallen by flight into the enemy's hands,

Who cry out for him yet as hounds that quest,

And roar as on their quarry.

Queen. Fled, and safe?

Mary Beaton. Ay, past their hands' reach that had rent him else;

Be sure he is forth, and free, or you should hear

More triumph in these cries.

Queen. God, thou art good!

Fling wide the window: I will know of them

If they be come to slay me. — What, my lords!

Are all these men of mine that throng by night

To make such show of service, and present

Strange offices of duty? Where are ye That are chief ushers to their turbulent love

Who come thus riotously to proffer it? Which is first here? a bold man should he be

That takes unbidden on him such desert —

Let me not say, a traitor.

Lindsay (without). Where is he,

The traitor that we seek? for here is none

But in your bosom.

Queen. Here then ends your search, For here am I; and traitors near enough

I see to pierce the bosom that they seek,

Where never shall be treason till its blood

Be spilt by hands of traitors that till now

Durst never rise so near it.

Lindsay. Give him forth, Or we will have these walls down.

Queen. What, with words? Is there such blast of trumpets in your breath

As shook the towers down of the foes of God

At the seventh sounding? yet we stand and laugh

That hear such brave breath blown and stormlike speech

Fly round our ears: is it because your war,

My lords, is waged with women, that ye make

Such woman's war on us?

Mar (without). Madam, we come To take you from his hand that is your shame,

And on his shameful head revenge that blood

Which was shed guiltless; hither was he fled,

We know, into your shelter: yield him up,

Ere yet worse come than what hath worst come yet

Queen. There is none here to die by you but I,

And none to mock you dying. Take all your swords;

It is a woman that they came to slay, And that contemns them: go not back for fear;

Pluck up your hearts; one valiant stroke or twain,

And ye are perfect of your work, and I Forever quit of treason; and I swear,

By God's and by his mother's name and mine,

Except ye slay me presently, to have
Such vengeance of you and my traitors
all

As the loud world shall ring with; so
to-night

Be counselled, and prevent me, that am
here

Yet in your hands; if ye dare slay me
not,

Ye are dead now here already in my
doom:

Take heart, and live to mock it.

Mar. He is fled.

Here boots us not to tarry, nor change
words

With her that hath such vantage as to
know

We have missed our prize and purpose
here, which was

To take the traitor that is fled, and
bring

Whither we now ride foiled, to Edin-
burgh,

Thence to return upon them.

Lindsay. Hear yet once:

You, madam, till our day be set of doom,
Look to the adulterer's head that hence

is flown,

Whose shame should now stand redder
in your face

Than blushes on his hand your hus-
band's blood,

And cleave more fast; for that dead
lord's revenge

Will we make proclamation, and raise
up

The streets and stones for vengeance
of your town

That sits yet sullied with bloodguilti-
ness

Till judgment make it clean; whose
walls to-night

Myself, for fault of better, ere I sleep
Will scale though gates be fastened,

and therein

Bring back and stablsh justice that
shall be

A memory to the world and unborn
men

Of murder and adultery.

Queen. Good my lord,

We thank you for the care you have
and pains

To speak before you smite; and tha
so long

The deed can follow not on the swift
word

For lack of spirit and breath to mate
with it;

So that they know who hear your threat
betimes

What fear it bears and danger, and for
fear

Take counsel to forestall it. Make
good speed;

For if your steed be shod but with fleet
speech,

Ere you shall stride the wall of our
good town

Its foot may trip upon a traitor's grave.

Mary Beaton. They ride fast yet:
hear you their starting cry?

Queen. For each vile word and ven-
omous breath of theirs,

I will desire at my lord's hand a head
When he shall bring them bound before
my foot.

If thou hast counsel in thee, serve me
now:

I must be forth, and masked in such
close wise

As may convey me secret to his side
Whence till our wars be done I will

not part

Nor then in peace forever: in this
shape

I should ride liable to all eyes and
hands

That might waylay me flying; but I
will play

As in a masque for pastime, and put
on

A horseboy's habit, or some meaner
man's

That wears but servant's steel upon his
thigh

And on his sleeve the badge but of a
groom,

And so pass noteless through toward
Haddington,

Whither my lord had mind to flee at
need,

And there expect me. Come: the
night wears out;

The shifting wind is sharper than it
was,

And the stars falter. Help me to put off
 This outward coil of woman; my heart
 beats
 Fast as for fear a coward's might beat,
 for joy
 That spurs it forth by night on warriors'
 ways,
 And stings it with sharp hope to find
 his face
 That shall look loving on me, and with
 smiles
 Mock the false form and cheer the con-
 stant heart
 That for his love's sake would be man's
 indeed.

ACT IV.—JOHN KNOX.

Time: June 15 and 16, 1567.

SCENE I.—CARBERRY HILL.

The QUEEN, BOTHWELL, and SOLDIERS.

Queen. I would this field where fate
 and we must cross
 Were other than it is; but for this
 thought,
 On what ill night some score of years
 ago
 Here lay our enemy's force before that
 fight
 Which made next day the face of Scot-
 land red,
 And trod her strength down under
 English feet,
 I would not shrink in this wide eye of
 dawn,
 In the far front of such a summer's
 day,
 To meet the mailed face of my traitors'
 host
 And with bared brows outbrave it.

Bothwell. Keep that heart,
 For fear we need it. Look beyond the
 bridge
 There at this hill's foot on the western
 bank,
 How strong they stand under the gather-
 ing light:
 I have not seen a battle fairer set
 Or in French fields, or these our thirst-
 ier lands
 That feed unslaked on blood.

Queen. They grow now green, —
 These hills and meadows that with
 slain men's lives
 Have fed the flocks of war; come ten
 years yet,
 And, though this day should drench
 them with more death
 Than that day's battle, not a stain shall
 stand
 On their fresh face for witness. Had
 God pleased
 To set a strong man armed with hands
 to fight,
 And on his head his heritage to keep,
 Sworded and crowned a king, in my sad
 stead,
 To fill the place I had not might to
 hold;
 And for the child then bitterly brought
 forth,
 Unseasonable, that being but woman
 born
 Broke with the news her father's heart,
 who died
 Desperate in her of comfort, had he
 sent
 The warrior that I would be, and in
 time
 To look with aweless eye on that day's
 fight
 That reddened with the ruin of our
 hopes
 The hour that rocked my cradle, — who
 shall say
 The scathe of Pinkie Cleugh and all
 that blood
 Had made the memory so unfortunate
 Of that which was my birth-time? Be-
 ing a man,
 And timelier born to better hap than
 mine,
 I might have set upon that iron day
 Another mark than signs it in our sight
 Red with reproach forever.
Bothwell. Ay, my queen?
 These four nights gone, you met me
 soldier-like
 Escaped from Borthwick, whence I
 brought you in,
 Three darkling hours past midnight, to
 Dunbar,
 Where you put off that sheath of fight
 ing man

For this poor woman's likeness yet you
 wear,
 Wherein you rode with your six hundred men
 To meet at Haddington but two days
 since
 These sixteen hundred border folk I
 led,
 And pass with me to Seyton: did you
 find
 Your life more light in you, or higher
 your heart,
 Inside that habit than this woman's
 coat
 That sits so short upon you?

Queen. By my life,
 I had forgot by this to be ashamed
 Of the strange shape I ride in, but
 your tongue
 Smites my cheek red as is this scanted
 weed
 Wherein I mask my queenship; yet
 God knows
 I had liefer ride thus forth toward such
 a day
 Than hide my sick heart and its fears
 at home
 In kinglier garments than this mask of
 mine,
 Thus with my kirtle kilted to the knee
 Like girls that ride in poor folks' bal-
 lads forth
 For love's sake and for danger's less
 than mine.
 Yet had I rather as your henchman ride
 At your right hand, and hear your bri-
 dle ring,
 Than sit thus womanly to watch men
 strike.

Bothwell. There will be parleying
 first: I have word of this,
 That they set forth at heaviest of the
 night
 From Edinburgh to cross our march
 betimes,
 And by the French ambassador your
 friend
 At Musselburgh were overtaken,
 whence
 We look for news by him what hearts
 they bear,
 What power, and what intent; he hath
 ta'en on him

To stand between our parts as mediator
 And bear the burden of our doubtful
 peace;

We must fight mouth to mouth ere
 hand to hand,
 But the clean steel must end it.

Queen. Now would God
 I had but one day's manhood, and
 might stand
 As king in arms against this battle's
 breach
 A twelve-hours' soldier, and my life to
 come
 Be bounded as a woman's! all those
 days

That must die darkling should not yet
 put out
 The fiery memory and the light of joy
 That out of this had lightened, and its
 heat

Should burn in them for witness left
 behind

On those piled ashes of my latter life.
 O God, for one good hour of man, and
 then

Sleep or a crown forever!

Bothwell. By God's light,
 The man that had no joy to strike for
 you

Were such a worm as God yet never
 made

For men to tread on. Kiss me: by
 your eyes

And fiery lips that make my heart's
 blood hot,

I swear to take this signet of your kiss
 As far into the fight as man may bear,
 And strike as two men in mine arm
 and stroke

Struck with one sense and spirit.

Queen. If I might change
 But this day with you in your stead to
 strike,

And you look on me fighting, as for
 me

You have fought ere this last heat so
 many a prize,

Or for your own hand ere your own
 was mine,

I would pray God for naught again
 alive.

But since my heart can strike not in my
 hand,

Fight you for me; put on my heart to
yours,
And let the might of both enforce your
arm
With more than its own manhood and
that strength
Which is your natural glory.

Bothwell. Sweet, I think,
When we have rid through this day's
wrath, if God
Shall give us peace and kingdom and
long life,
And make them fruitful to us, we shall
bring forth
A brood of kings as lions. Now in
brief
If this shall be, or shall not, may we
know;
For look where yonder, facing to the
sun
Comes up to us-ward from the under
field
One with a flag of message; in mine
eye
It is the Frenchman.

Queen. I will meet him here;
Here will I sit upon this rock for
throne,
And give such audience as my fortune
may,—
Either the last that shall salute me
queen,
Or first of my new reign, that from this
day
Shall fearfully begin for them whose
fear
Till now has held me shackled, and my
will
Confined of theirs unqueenly.

Bothwell. I meantime
Will see our line in order; for this
truce
Must hold not long; I would our hosts
should meet
Before the heat strikes of the middle
day,
And this June sun drop on our soldiers'
heads
Or shoot their eyes out.

[*Exit.*

Queen. If God give us peace!
Yet, though he give and we twain see
good days,

I would not lose for many fortunate
years,
And empire ringed with smooth secu-
rity,
The sharp and dangerous draught of
this delight
That out of chance and peril and keen
fear
Springs as the wine out of the trampled
grape
To make this hour sweet to my lips,
and bid
My dancing heart be like a wave in the
sun
When the sea sways between the sun
and wind
As my sense now between the fears
and hopes
That die to-day forever. Oh! this doubt
That is not helpless, but has armor on
And hands to fight with, has more joy
withal,
And puts more spirit into the flesh of
life,
More heart into the blood, and light in
the eyes,
Than the utter hour of triumph, and
the fight
More than the prize is worth man's
prizing; yea,
For when all's won, all's done, and
naught to do
Is as a chain on him that with void
hands
Sits pleasureless and painless. I had
rather
Have looked on Actium with Mark
Antony
Than bound him fast on Cydnus. O
my hour!
Be good to me, as even for the doubt's
sake
More than safe life I love thee; yet
would choose
Not now to know, though I might see
the end,
If thou wilt be good to me; do thy
work,
Have thine own end; and, be thou bad
or good,
Thou shalt nor smite nor crown a
queen in heart
Found lesser than her fortune.

Enter DU CROC.

Now, my lord,
What is their will who by such sovereign show
Should be my lords indeed? if you
that came
'Twixt crown and crown ambassador
pass now
Between our camps on message: but
this day
Shall leave in Scotland but one sovereignty
To see that sun sink.

Du Croc. Madam, from the lords
I come on errand but for love and fear
That move me toward your highness;
on whose part
I reasoning with them of their faith to
you,
And bond wherein their loyalties should
live,
By counsel of the Laird of Lethington,
Was charged to bear you from them
present word
For what they stand against your sight
in arms,
And will not but by force of yours
dissolve
Till it be granted.

Queen. Speak, my lord: I know
Your heart is whole and noble as their
faith
Is flawed and rotten; no disloyal word
Shall make your tongue disloyal in
mine ear,
Speaking for them.

Du Croc. This is their whole demand:
That from the bloody hand which holds
your own
You pluck it forth, and cast him from
your sight
To judgment, who now stands through
you secure,
And makes his weapon of your
wounded name,
And of your shame his armor; and to
him
They offer fight with equal hand to
hand,
Of noble seconds in what sum he will
To match in blood and number with
his own,

If so he list to meet their chosen of
men
In personal battle, backed with less or
more
Or singly sworded; but this much they
swear, —
They had rather make their beds in the
earth alive
Than yet sit still and let this evil be.
And on your own part I beseech your
grace,
Set not your heart against the hearts of
these,
Lest it be broken of them, but betimes
Call yet to mind what grief and shame
will be
Among your friends in France and all
our part
To see you so with this man's hap in-
wound
That in his fall you cast yourself away,
And hand in hand run on with him to
death.

Queen. They are all forsworn that
seek his death: all they
With these blown tongues now quest-
ing for his blood
By judgment set him free as inno-
cence,
And now take back the doom they
gave, and turn
On their own heads the lie: devise
such shame
As lewd folk loathe, to gird themselves
withal,
And wear it for a jewel; seek and set
The name of liar upon them like a
crown,
And bind about them as a coat and
cloak
Plain treason and ungilded infamy,
Bare as a beggar; let them sue for
grace,
Kneel here and ask me favor; save as
thus
I treat not with them. Say how I sit
here,
In this mean raiment, on this naked
stone,
Their queen to judge them, and with
heart to weigh
Their fault against my mercy; which
yet once,

Though hardly their submission may
deserve,

Say, haply they may find.

Re-enter BOTHWELL.

Bothwell. Good day, my lord.

You look far off upon me; by your
brow

And strange-eyed salutation I may read
The burden of your this day's embassy.
Is it but I whom all these ranked in
arms

Are come against to battle?

Du Croc. Ay, my lord:

No hand is raised there dangerous to
the queen,

Nor thought of heart not loyal.

Bothwell. Why to me?

What hurt have I done to them? none
of these

But would be gladly in my place, who
had

The heart to seek it; 'tis the braver
man

That ever fortune follows: what I hold
I have won not basely, but from forth
her hand

Have ta'en it manlike, and with spirit
as good

Have girt me to maintain it. For my
part,

I seek no bloodshed, but in single field
Will meet with whom their lot shall
fall upon

That shall be found fair champion on
their part

To bear the general quarrel; and to
this

My state and present name shall be no
bar,

But the queen's consort as her man
shall fight

In any good cause simply with God's
help

With any sword that shames not mine
to meet.

Queen. It is my cause: me must they
strike, or none;

Myself am all the quarrel; let them
yield,

Or give me battle.

Bothwell. Then, no need of words:

Let but your excellency stand here
by,

And see the show as once that envoy
bound

'Twixt Hannibal and Scipio; by God's
grace

This too shall be worth sight and good
report

If he not fail us.

Du Croc. Madam, with rent heart

Must I take leave, then, of you.

Queen. Sir, farewell.

I pray you, say not that you saw me
weep:

These tears are not to turn the sword's
edge soft,

Nor made of fear nor pity; but my
heart

Holds no more rule on my rebellious
eyes

Than truth on those my traitors; yet I
trust

Again to bring both under.

[*Exit DU CROC.*]

Bothwell. We must fight;

Yet had I rather take it on mine hand

Than dare the general field.

Queen. No, for God's love.

Bothwell. God hath not so much
love of us to serve;

Nor would I wager on his head to-
day

That he shall fight upon our side
Look there!

They are at point to cross; even now
you see

The first glint on them stirring of the
sun

As they set forth to make by the eastern
bank

Along the meadows edgeways toward
Dalkeith

Before they turn in wheel, and take the
hills;

I see their bent of battle; yet we keep
The slopes and crest here with our
covering lines

If they stand fast.

Queen. What, have you fear of that?

Bothwell. I cannot tell. The day
grows fiery hot:

I would we might close in at once, and
strike

Before the noon burn; all the pause we
make.

Who stand here idle watchers till they
 join,
 Takes off some heart from us for weariness,
 And gives us doubt; I would the field
 were set.

Queen. Why should not we that wait
 for them and chafe
 Break rather on them coming, and
 brush off
 Their gathering muster from the hill-
 skirts there
 With one sheer stroke of battle as from
 heaven,
 Right on them hurling down with all
 our host
 Out of these heights ere they made
 head below?

Bothwell. No, my sweet captain: we
 must hold this fast,
 This height of vantage, and keep close
 our ranks
 As I have ranged in order: see again,
 How they sweep round, and settle fast
 in file
 There on the ridge of Cowsland, with
 their backs
 Turned on the sun that climbs toward
 noon too fast,
 And in their front that hollow gap of
 hill
 Three crossbow-shots across; so far
 apart
 We look upon each other for a
 breath,
 And hold our hands from battle; but
 you see
 How soon both sides must lash to-
 gether: yea,
 I would we might not hold off yet an
 hour,
 But close at once, and end.

Queen. That burgh below,
 Is it not Preston Pans? These hills
 are set
 As stages for the show of such high
 game
 As is played out for God's content
 on earth
 Between men's kings and kingdoms;
 yet I think
 He that beholds hath no such joy o' the
 game

As he that plays, nor can the joy be
 known
 Save of man only, that man has to
 play
 When the die's throw rings death for
 him or life.
 How clear the wind strikes from the
 mounting sun!
 I am glad at heart the day we have
 of fight
 Should look thus lively on both sides
 that meet
 Beneath so large an open eye of heaven.
 The wind and sun are in my blood;
 I feel
 Their fire and motion in me like a
 breath
 That makes the heart leap. Dear, I
 too have read
 The tale of Rome whence lightly you
 chose out
 A likeness for us; but the parts we
 bear,
 We are to play them with a difference,
 take
 A fairer end upon us though we fall
 Than they that in their hazard were
 most like
 To this our imminent fortune: had I
 been
 She for whose lips love let the round
 world fall,
 And all man's empire founder, on that
 day
 When earth's whole strengths met on
 the warring sea,
 And side with side clashed of the king-
 domed world,
 I had not given my galleys wings for
 fear
 To bear me out of the eye of battle,
 nor
 Put space of flight between me and my
 love,
 More than I think on this wave's edge
 that foams
 To leave our chance unshipwrecked, or
 forsake
 My more imperial Antony.
Bothwell. Would that now
 We stood less near their hazard! on
 our part
 I fear to see the lines already melt

If we hold longer off, and this firm
front
Unfix itself and with no stroke dis-
solve
As snows in summer: half my folk by
this
For thirst are fallen upon the wine-
casks there
We brought from Seyton; and for those
that stand,
We have not half their hearts upon our
side
Whose hands are armed to uphold it.
I must fight
With whom they choose, and take upon
my hand
The day with all its issue: if our cause
Be set upon the general cast of fight,
It is but lost. Let messengers be sent
To know of the enemy if his challenge
hold
Which I stand armed to answer; but
no Scot
Shall bear the message and betray our
need:
Two Frenchmen of your guard shall
cross, and bring
Their fighter's name back that my sword
must know,
And we twain meet, and end it in fair
field
Between these ranks; and for my single
part,
I am glad the chance should hang but
on my hand,
And my sole stroke determine the dim
war
That flags yet in the dark and doubt of
fate
Till mine arm fix it fast, and in God's
sight
Confirm and close the chapter of it.
Come,
Choose you your envoys.
Queen. Nay, choose you the man
That you will fight with; let him be
not one
Who had no part with us in Darnley's
blood,
So God shall strike not on his unjust
side
Who fights against you.

Bothwell. Faith, if God were judge,

He should not do us right to approve
their cause
Who helped us to that slaying, and in
its name
Take on them now to accuse us, and
appeal
As guiltless to him against their proper
deed
And this right hand that wrought but
with their will;
Wherefore, so far forth as it hangs on
God,
From such a champion I should bear
the bell,
If he be righteous; which to assure you
of,
That even for God's sake you may feel
no fear,
Let Morton meet me.
Queen. Oh, that two-tongued knave!
The worst of all my traitors, whom I
spared
And should have slain when you had
brought him home
To help despatch his friend that had
been! Nay,
Him shall you meet not: he shall die
no death
So brave as by your sword; the axe
thinks long
To clasp his cursed neck; your hand,
dear lord,
Shall not redeem it.
Bothwell. Come, content you, sweet;
Him I must meet, or other; and my-
self
Care not if one that struck with us it be
Or one that struck not; only for your
ease,
To make you trustful for God's judg-
ment's sake
And confident of justice, I thought well
To choose a man of counsel with us
then,
And on this challenge fight with him,
that God
Might witness with us of his treacherous
cause
If I should win the field; but, by this
hand,
I put more trust in it and in my sword
Than in God's hand or judgment. Have
no fear.

The just and unjust that he looks upon,
With blameless hand dividing their just
doom

To one and other. Yea, as thou art
Lord,

With eye to read between our hearts,
and hand

To part between us punishment and
grace,

Hear, God, and judge; and as thy sen-
tence is,

So shall man's tongue speak ever of
this day

And of his cause that conquers.

Morton. Laird of Grange,
While these that twice brought mes-
sage from the queen

Bear now this last news back of what
they hear,

Lest, when the traitor knows whom he
shall meet,

His foul heart fail him, and his false
foot flee

By what way forth is left him toward
Dunbar,

Take you two hundred horse, and with
good speed

Cross to the right beyond this hollow
ground,

And cut him off: so, though he fain
would fly

And she stand fast or follow, yet we
hold

As in one toil the lioness and the wolf
That clomb by night into the lion's bed,

Who stand now staked about with nets,
and, ringed

With pikes and hounds of hunters,
glare at bay

With eyes and teeth that shine against
us yet;

But the fierce feet are trammelled in
our toils,

Nor shall the tongues lap life again of
man.

Du Croc. Ay, lion-like, my lord, she
bears herself,

As who should shake all spears or
shafts away

Like leaves that fell upon her, and all
fears

As grains of dust brushed off; but he
too makes

Such gallant show at need of such good
heart

As in this utter peril where he stands
Might win, for one that had no unjust
cause,

Pity and praise of enemies, and for him
At least such mingled and discolored
fame

As falls not on a coward; nor can men
Report him in his end and sore extreme

But as a soldier tried of hand and
brain,

Skilful and swift, with heart to match
his eye

And wit to serve them; could these yet
avail

To ransom him by spirit of soldiership
And craft with courage tempered as
with fire

To wield with fiery cunning the wide
war,

He should not fall but mightily, nor
cease

But with a strife as earthquake.

Morton. Well, my lord,
With no such strife we think to win
him. — Go,

And if they send again to treat with us,
Speak you with her, and bring us once
more word.

SCENE III. — THE QUEEN'S CAMP.

The QUEEN and BOTHWELL.

Queen. Are we quite lost?

Bothwell. Ay, if I fight not; but
I will not die and fight not.

Queen. What, no help?

Is there not left a score of manlike men
To stand and strike round us that in
their ring

May fight enclosed, and fall where none
shall fly?

Are all our strengths slid from us? not
one troop

That has not piecemeal droppèd with
shame away?

Not some twelve friends to back us yet,
and die

As never men died nobler?

Bothwell. No, not three:

My levies there of Lothian and the
Merse

<p>Are slipped away like water; of your men Not yet four hundred lie along the heights, Nor half will stay of these a half-hour hence. Look too where yonder rides about the hill The Laird of Grange, between us and Dunbar, As to make onset with two hundred horse Thence where the way is smooth, while those in front Charge up the hill right on our unfenced camp, And their trap's teeth shut on us. This remains Of all our chance, this one way to make end, That, while they yet refuse me not a man To bear the day's weight on his sword and mine, I go to meet whom they soever choose, With no more question made; and this I will, If yet they grant me but their meanest man For opposite as equal. <i>Queen.</i> Have they hearts, That have you for their fiery star of fight To see and not to follow? That I could But give mine own among all these away, And with the parcels of it portioned out Divide myself into a hundred hearts Of manlier-spirited blood, to raise us up For these a tribe of soldiers! Speak to them, And they will hear, and hunger to go on Full of your words to death; yea, all as I Will thirst to die around you. O my God! What is their blood, that it can kindle not To be so called of such a chief to die,</p>	<p>To hear his words, and leap not? Hast thou made Such stuff of man's flesh as we take for man, And mixed not soul enough to serve the hound Who gives for love his life up? These go back, These that might die, they start aside from death, They have no joy to close with it, but fear,— These that I deemed, come what might worst on us, Should fall with face and heart one fire of joy To ride on death, and grapple him and die. Have I not heard of men once in the world? I see none only but mine only love, Who finds not one to follow. You shall fight, And, if we thrive not, shame them with your end As I with mine ensuing. That I might stand Your second, and my sword be page to yours, As on your death my death should wait at need, And halt not after! No, you shall not die. O miserable white hanging hands, that rest Baffled and bloodless! let your king- dom go, Let all things pass together: what of price Should ye keep back that could not fight for him Who falls for lack of seconds? Nay the fault Comes all of me that fail him, I it is Bring down that high head to the earth with mine, That helmless head, for my sake; oh, for love's, Kiss me, and kill me! be not wroth, but strike; For if I live I shall but deal more death,</p>
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 With blameless hand dividing their just
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 To one and other. Yea, as thou art
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 With eye to read between our hearts,
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That has not piecemeal dropped with
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 Nor half will stay of these a half-hour
 hence.
 Look too where yonder rides about the
 hill
 The Laird of Grange, between us and
 Dunbar,
 As to make onset with two hundred
 horse
 Thence where the way is smooth, while
 those in front
 Charge up the hill right on our unfenced
 camp,
 And their trap's teeth shut on us. This
 remains
 Of all our chance, this one way to make
 end,
 That, while they yet refuse me not a
 man
 To bear the day's weight on his sword
 and mine,
 I go to meet whom they soever choose,
 With no more question made; and this
 I will,
 If yet they grant me but their meanest
 man
 For opposite as equal.
Queen. Have they hearts,
 That have you for their fiery star of
 fight
 To see and not to follow? That I
 could
 But give mine own among all these
 away,
 And with the parcels of it portioned
 out
 Divide myself into a hundred hearts
 Of manlier-spirited blood, to raise us
 up
 For these a tribe of soldiers! Speak
 to them,
 And they will hear, and hunger to go
 on
 Full of your words to death; yea, all
 as I
 Will thirst to die around you. O my
 God!
 What is their blood, that it can kindle
 not
 To be so called of such a chief to die,

To hear his words, and leap not? Hast
 thou made
 Such stuff of man's flesh as we take
 for man,
 And mixed not soul enough to serve
 the hound
 Who gives for love his life up? These
 go back,
 These that might die, they start aside
 from death,
 They have no joy to close with it, but
 fear,—
 These that I deemed, come what might
 worst on us,
 Should fall with face and heart one fire
 of joy
 To ride on death, and grapple him and
 die.
 Have I not heard of men once in the
 world?
 I see none only but mine only love,
 Who finds not one to follow. You
 shall fight,
 And, if we thrive not, shame them with
 your end
 As I with mine ensuing. That I might
 stand
 Your second, and my sword be page to
 yours,
 As on your death my death should wait
 at need,
 And halt not after! No, you shall not
 die.
 O miserable white hanging hands, that
 rest
 Baffled and bloodless! let your king-
 dom go,
 Let all things pass together: what of
 price
 Should ye keep back that could not
 fight for him
 Who falls for lack of seconds? Nay
 the fault
 Comes all of me that fail him, I
 is
 Bring down that high head to the earth
 with mine,
 That helpless head, for my sake; oh,
 for love's,
 Kiss me, and kill me! be not wroth,
 but strike;
 For if I live I shall but deal more
 death,

And where I would not shall the more
 destroy,
 Living and loving; yea, whom I would
 save,
 Him shall I slay the surelier: save
 then me,
 Lest I do this, and dying abhor myself,
 Save me and slay; let not my love
 again
 Kill more than me, that would have
 shed my blood
 To spare the blood I shed; make me
 now sure;
 Let me cease here.

Bothwell. Peace, and give heed: you
 see
 Whither the day has brought us, and
 what hope
 Holds anywhere of rescue; this one
 lot
 Lies in my hand by fortune to be
 drawn, —
 That yet by God's and by our enemies'
 grace
 I may fight singly though my whole
 world fail,
 And end no less than soldier. Now,
 my queen,
 As you are highest of women's hearts
 that live,
 And nobler than your station stands
 your soul, —
 As you had never fear, and in this
 past
 As ever you have loved me, — by such
 sign
 And in such name I charge you, put
 me not
 In this great need to shame: let me go
 forth
 As should yourself being king, had you
 the cause
 That our linked loves put on me. By
 that heart
 That is so fain within you to be man's,
 Make me not meaner than the man I
 am,
 Nor worthless of the name; think with
 what soul
 Would you stand up to battle in my
 stead,
 And wrong me not to pluck that prize
 away,

Which, were you I, you would not yield
 to me,
 Nor I would ask of you; desire not
 this,
 To have me for your sake so vile a
 thing,
 When I should rise up worthiest, that
 no man
 Could bear such name, and live; bid me
 not be —
 Because you love me that are first on
 earth
 And crowned of queens most royal —
 such a slave
 As might not seek and be not spit
 upon
 The foulest favor that is given for
 gold
 From lips more vile than all things else
 but I
 Who durst not fight for you: make me
 not this;
 Let me die rather such a man as might,
 Having your love, had fortune loved
 him too,
 Have lived beside you kinglike, and
 not left
 Less memory than a king's.
Queen. Oh, you shall go!
 Look how I hold you not: yes, you
 shall fight,
 And I sit strengthless here. — You shall
 not yet:
 If I did know that God were with my
 heart,
 Then should you go indeed; could I
 sit sure
 My prayer had power upon him, and
 my cause
 Had made him mine to fight for me,
 and take
 My charge and this field's issue in his
 hand,
 I would not doubt to send you. Nay,
 myself
 Will speak to those my soldiers; they
 will fight;
 They shall not choose for shame who
 hear me speak,
 But fear to fight not. Oh, for all this
 yet,
 If they were men about me, they would
 sweep

Those traitors from the hillside as a
 wind,
 And make me way to live. What! if I
 speak,
 If I kneel to them, each man by his
 name,
 Bid him fight for me though I be not
 king,
 His king to lead him, — as, had I been
 born
 My father's son, they should have
 fought, and found
 A king to fight for and a sword to lead
 Worth many a good sword's following,
 — nay, but these
 That will not fight for you whose sword
 they see
 Worth all their swords to follow, for
 no king's
 Would they take heart to strike.
 Love, you shall go:
 Send out a flag to bid one come and
 say
 Who dares of all fight with you. Why,
 methought
 This march-folk loved you and your
 sword's bright name
 That burned along their borders: is
 there left
 No such fierce love of theirs and faith
 at need
 To do us soldier's service?
Bothwell. Look, and see:
 Their ranks unknit themselves, and
 slide more fast
 From the bare slopes away whereon
 they stand
 Than the last leaves or the last snows
 that fade
 From off the fields or branches: and
 this thaw
 Speaks not our spring, but winter.
 Let them pass;
 If I may stand but in mine enemy's
 face,
 One foot of ours shall slip not, and one
 hand
 Be reddened on our side. I will go
 send
 Word with your flag of truce by Ormis-
 ton,
 To bid their spokesman to us. [*Exit.*
Queen. What am I worth,

That can nor fight nor pray? my heart
 is shut
 As a sealed spring of fire, and in mine
 ears
 This air that holds no thunder, but fair
 day,
 Sounds louder than a stricken brazen
 bell
 That rings in a great wind, or the blown
 sea
 That roars by night for shipwreck.
Re-enter BOTHWELL with KIRKALDY.
Bothwell. Here is he
 That brings our lords' will with him,
 and shall show
 But in your private ear; I while you
 please
 Will wait apart upon you. [*Retires.*
Queen. Is it you,
 Is it my friend of France, my knight
 and friend,
 Comes on such errand in mine extreme
 need
 To me that honored him? Sir, time
 has been
 That, had one asked me what man most
 on earth
 I would for trust have sought the ser-
 vice of
 In such sore straits as this, I had found
 no name
 But yours to leap the first upon my
 lips,
 On whom I have seen my father, the
 French king,
 Point with his hand, saying, *Yonder*
goes there one
Of the most valiant men in all our
age,
 And ever would he choose you on his
 side
 In all his pastimes for your manhood's
 sake
 And might in jousts of men and gal-
 lant games,
 And when they shot for mastery at the
 butts
 Would make you shoot two arrows still
 for one,
 And took delight beyond all shots of
 theirs
 To see how far forth would your great
 shaft fly,

Sped for his pleasure; and my heart
 grew great
 For my land's sake whereof your
 strength was made,
 That bore such men for honor; and the
 best
 Who served my father Henry in his
 wars
 Looked reverently upon you horsed at
 head
 Of your brave hundred men that rode
 with you,
 And never the great constable of France
 Would speak to you uncovered as to
 one
 Less than his own place worthy; and
 your hand
 Here on these marches hath not lost
 its praise
 For many as fair a stroke as overthrew
 Between our ranks and the English in
 mid-field
 Lord Rivers' brother, fighting for this
 land
 That with a tongue as true and service-
 able
 You strove in speech to save the free-
 dom of,
 That by no policy it should be subdued
 To a French province. So for faith
 and love,
 For valor, wisdom, and for gentleness,
 I wist no Scot had worthier name alive:
 Shall I say now I have no deadlier
 foe? [KIRKALDY *kneels*.
 I do not bid you kneel: speak, and
 stand up;
 I have no help or comfort of men's
 knees,
 Nor pleasure of false worship; well I
 know,
 For all knees bowed, how hearts and
 hands are bent
 Of mine own men against me. Speak,
 I pray:
 I am as their servant bound who speak
 in you
 And open-eared to hear them.
Kirkaldy. From the lords,
 Madam, no word I have to bring but
 one,
 That from this field they will not part
 alive

Without the man in bonds they came
 to seek;
 Him will they take, or die: but on your
 part
 They have no thought that is not set to
 serve
 And do you honor, would but you for-
 sake
 The murderer of your husband, who to
 you
 Can be no husband, being but lately
 wed
 To the earl of Huntley's sister, and
 your friend
 By your own mean and favor.
Queen (to BOTHWELL). Hold, my
 lord:
 Let not your man give fire. — Sir, guard
 yourself:
 See you not where one stands to shoot
 at you? —
 You will not do me this dishonor, see-
 ing
 I have given my faith he should come
 safely through,
 And go back safe?
Bothwell. Why let him, then, and say
 That I will yet maintain my proffered
 cause
 To fight with any that shall challenge
 me
 Of the king's murder.
Kirkaldy. Sir, the first was I
 To let you wit myself would fight with
 you
 Upon that quarrel; and the first re-
 fused,
 As being nor earl nor lord nor mate of
 yours,
 But a poor baron only; the like word
 You sent to Tullibardine; in whose
 place
 Stands now my lord of Lindsay, if your
 heart
 Yet fail you not to meet him, as it
 seems
 Now to grow cold in shadow of his
 sword
 That hangs against you in the air ad-
 vanced,
 Darkening your sight and spirit.
Bothwell (to the QUEEN). Shall this
 be said,

This shame go forth forever through
 the world
 Of one that held you by the wedded
 hand
 And loosed it even for fear? Now let
 me go:
 There is no way now but the best, and
 this
 You shall no more forbid me: one last
 time
 I do implore you, make not of your
 love
 The branding-iron that should sign me
 slave
 In sight of all men always, and on you
 Stamp the vile name of wife to no true
 man,
 Bnt harlot of a coward: who shall
 spare
 To throw that name and shame on
 such a love
 As came to such an end as ours shall
 come
 If here its sun set bloodless, but more
 red
 With shame than blood could brand it?
Queen. I have thought,
 And set my heart against all chance to
 come
 Of blame or blood that ever shall mark
 me;
 Alone I take it on mine only hand,
 And will not yield this one thing up to
 yours,
 Who have yielded all things else, and
 this I would,
 But that I may not with my soul
 alive.—
 Sir, if my lords within whose hand I
 am
 Shall stand content to let my husband
 go,
 Into their ward will I give up myself
 On what good terms shall please them
 to call good,
 So he may pass forth freely with such
 friends
 Of these that have not hands enough
 to fight
 As shall cleave to him; I pray you
 make good speed,
 And let this day have end.
Kirkaldy. Madam, I go.

[Exit.]

Queen. Do not speak yet: a word
 should burst my heart;
 It is a hollow crystal full of tears
 That even a breath might break, and
 they be spilt
 And life run out with them; no dia-
 mond now,
 But weaker than of wax. Life of that
 heart,
 There is but one thing hath no reme-
 dy,—
 Death. All ills else have end or hope
 of end,
 And time to work their worst before
 time change:
 This death hath none; there is all hope
 shut fast,
 All chance bound up forever: change
 nor time
 Can help nor comfort this. You shall
 not die;
 I can hold fast no sense of thought but
 this,—
 You shall not.
Bothwell. Well, being sundered, we
 may live,
 And living meet; and here to hold the
 field
 Were but a deadly victory, and my hand
 The mockery of a conqueror's; we
 should pass
 No less their prisoners from the field
 thus won
 Than from these lists defeated. You
 do well;
 They dare not urge or strain the power
 they have
 To bring me prisoner where my witness
 borne
 Might show them parcel of the deed
 and guilt
 For which they rise up to lay hold on
 me
 As upright men of doom, and with pure
 hands
 To hale me to their judgment. I will
 go,
 Till good time bring me back; and you
 that stay,
 Keep faith with me.
Queen. Oh, how does one break faith?
 What are they that are faithless? by
 my love,

I cannot tell or think how I should lie,
Should live and lie to you that are my
faith,
My soul, my spirit, my very and only
God,
My truth and trust that makes me true
of heart,
My life that feeds and light that lightens
me,
My breath and blood of living. Doth
God think
How I shall be without you? what
strange breath
Shall my days draw, what strange blood
feed my life,
When this life that is love is gone from
them
And this light lost? Where shall my
true life go,
And by what far ways follow to find
love,
Fly where love will? Where will you
turn from me?

Bothwell. Hence will I to Dunbar,
and thence again
There is no way but northward and to
ship
From the north islands; thence be-
times abroad
By land or sea to lurk, and find my life
Till the wheel turn.

Queen. Ah God! that we were set
Far out at sea alone by storm and
night
To drive together on one end, and
know
If life or death would give us good or
ill
And night or day receive, and heaven
or earth
Forget us or remember!—He comes
back:

Here is the end.
Bothwell. But till time change his
tune;
No more nor further. We shall find
our day.

Queen. Have we not found? I know
not what we shall,
But what hath been and is, and whence
they are,
God knows if now I know not. He is
here.

Re-enter KIRKALDY.

Kirkaldy. Madam, the lords return
by me this word:
With them must you go back to Edin-
burgh,
And there be well entreated as o
friends;
And for the duke, they are with on-
mind content
He should part hence for safe and
present flight;
But here may tarry not, or pass not
free.
This is the last word from them by my
mouth.

Queen. Ay is it, sir,—the last word
I shall hear,—
Last in mine ear forever: no com-
mand
Nor threat of man shall I give ear to
more,
That have heard this.—Will you not
go, my lord?

Is it not I would hold you.
Bothwell. Then, farewell,
And keep your word to me. What, no
breath more?
Keep then this kiss too with the word
you gave,
And with them both my heart and its
good hope
To find time yet for you and me. Fare-
well. [*Exit.*]

Queen. O God! God! God!
Cover my face for me:
I cannot heave my hand up to my
head;
Mine arms are broken.
Is he got to horse?
I do not think one can die more than
this.

I did not say farewell.
Kirkaldy. My lord is gone.
Queen. Whom spake I to? I have
no woman here.
All these men's eyes have seen my
naked face
Wrung without tears for anguish, and
no hand
Hide my blind eyes if haply they might
weep
Great drops of blood and fiery.—Laird
of Grange,

! yield myself upon such terms to you
As in these lords' name you rehearsed
to me :

Have here my hand for sign.

Kirkaldy. Upon this hand

I lay the loyal witness of my lips

For duteous heart and service, and
crave leave

That I may lead your highness through
these ranks,

Where at the hill's foot we may find
your friends

Who shall come forth to meet you as
their queen

With all fair reverence.

Queen. Lead me to my lords :

For one so poor a servant as I am,

Here are too many masters. I could
pray,

But that they lack my service and should
chafe

If I dwelt long upon my prayer, and let
My duty sleep or slacken toward them ;
else

I could pray God to shut up from these
lands

His hand and eye of favor, that no dew
Might breed herefrom and no bloom
break again

Nor grass be glad forever ; rain nor sun
Comfort their cankered face and harden-
ing heart,

Nor hand that tilled or foot that trod of
man

Pass and not curse them. Let me look
but once

Upon this hill whereon till this ninth
hour

Mine enemies' hands have crucified my
heart.

The sun burns yet, and the stream runs ;
nor eye

Nor ear have these nor pity. Come, I
talk,

Who had no mind ; God will not heed
me : come. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV. — THE CAMP OF THE
LORDS.

MORTON, HUME, LINDSAY, *etc.*

Morton. What, is the Frenchman
gone ?

Lindsay. With heavy cheer,
By this to set sad foot in Edinburgh.

Morton. There should we be by night
fall ; and you see

How the day reddens downward, and
this hill

Hath all its west side fiery ; he hath
done

The queen and us small service, to put
off

Her hour of yielding. Look ! the last
spears left

Begin to move in sunder ; there he
flies,

The traitor, with his heartless handful
backed

That yet for fear cling to him ; and on
this side

Grange leads her down the hill between
our horse,

Who comes not like one captive.

Enter the QUEEN and KIRKALDY.

Queen. Tell me, sirs,

Are they my doomsmen whom I come
to find,

And those your headsmen who stand
sworded there

And visored soldier-like, that cry on
me

To burn and slay me ? Let me have
quick doom,

And be beyond their crying.

Morton. Madam, I think

You cannot fear of us a deadly doom,
Nor shall you find. — Silence those
throats, I say !

Queen. I have not said I feared ; nor
shall there come

For you that lying breath upon my lips.
What will ye do with what of me ye

have

If not what these tongues cry for ?

Morton. Some man ride, —

You, Laird of Grange, with two or
three at back, —

And with the flatlong stroke of your
good swords

Smite their mouths dumb. — Madam,
take you no heed :

They shall not hurt you.

Queen. Sir, no heed have I ;

I think these common haters shall not
hurt

Indeed, nor smite me but with tongues;
 'tis you,
 My good lords only, from whose noble
 hands
 I look to take my death, who would not
 lose
 Nor lack this royal office. For my
 sake
 Do them no hurt, I pray, who are but
 your mouths
 As you their hands; I see no choice of
 you,
 Or them the lesser traitors.

Hume. I will go:

Ride you that way, sir, by their ranks
 who shout,
 As I this side; for every way men hear
 How the field rings that all the hills
 roar back
 With noise of names and cries to burn
 the whore
 And murderess of her husband: spare
 no strokes
 To shame or smite them silent.

Queen. You, my friends,
 Good servants that have care of my
 good name,
 And loyal lovers—of your love and
 grace,
 May it please you show me whither I
 must go
 To find what face of death? or if yet
 none,
 And yet ye have not the hardy hearts
 to slay,
 To uncrown and slay me, I require you
 then
 Deliver me into my kinsmen's hands
 Of the house of Hamilton, in whose
 good ward
 I am content to abide men's evil will
 With honorable surety; which refused,
 Of life nor honor shall I hold me sure
 For all your vows and voices, but
 esteem

My life to be as all your honors, dead.

Morton. Madam, with mocks you
 cannot make us mad,
 To bring you to their trustless hands
 whose ward
 Should be to you but dangerous, and
 to us,
 And all this kingdom's hope in heritage,

And all men's good, most mortal. You
 must go
 With us to Edinburgh, and being made
 safe
 Abide the judgment there that shall not
 fall
 By fierce election of men's clamorous
 mouths
 Whose rage would damn you to the
 fire-clad death,
 But by their sentence who shall do no
 wrong,
 If justice may with honor make them
 sure,
 And faith defend from error.

Queen. Ay, my lord?
 I shall be doomed, then, ere I die, and
 stand
 Before their face for judgment who
 should kneel
 To take my sentence as a scourge, and
 bear
 What brand my tongue set on them?
 Nay, ye are mad.
 Kings have been slain with violence
 and red craft,
 Or fallen by secret or by popular hands;
 But what man heard yet ever of a king
 Set to the bar of his own men, to plead
 For life with rebels' reasons, and wage
 words
 With whoso dare of all these baser
 born
 Rise up to judge him? Surely I shall
 die,—
 Be rent perchance in pieces of men's
 fangs,
 But of their mouths not sentenced. In
 fair field
 That only steel that bids a king's neck
 stoop
 Is the good sword that in a warlike
 hand
 Makes his head bow, and cuts not off
 his crown
 But with the stroke of battle: who hath
 seen
 By doom of man a king's head king-
 domless
 Bow down to the axe and block? so
 base an edge
 Can bite not on such necks. Let me
 bleed here,

By their swift hands who ravin for my
 blood;
 Or be assured how if ye let me live
 I live to see you die for me as
 dogs:
 Ye shall be hanged on crosses, nailed
 on rows,
 For birds to rend alive; ye shall have
 doom,
 A dog's doom and a traitor's, and the
 cord
 Strangle the sentence in your laboring
 lips,
 And break the plea that heaves your
 throat, and leaves
 Your tongue thrust forth to blacken:
 ye shall wage
 Words and try causes with the worms
 and flies
 Till they leave bare your bones to sun
 and wind
 As shame shall leave your titles. Was
 it you [To LINDSAY.
 That were to fight before me with my
 lord?
 Give me your hand, sir: by this hand
 of yours
 I swear for this thing yet to have your
 head,
 And so thereof assure you.
Morton. Bid the camp
 Strike, and set forth behind us. Sirs, to
 horse;
 And, madam, be not yet so great of
 speech
 As utterly to outwear your spirit of
 strength
 With pain and passion that can bear
 no fruit
 But wind and wrath and barren bitter-
 ness.
 Vex not yourself more than your foes
 would vex,
 Of whom we would be none that ride
 with you
 From them to guard you that would lay
 red hands
 On you yet faint and weak from this
 fierce day.
Queen. My body and head wax faint,
 but not my heart;
 I have yet there fire enough for all of
 you,

To burn your strengths up that my fee-
 bler limbs
 Can make my heart not yield to nor
 bow down,
 Nor fear put out its fires. Come,
 worthy lords,
 And lead me to my loving town again,
 That bears your heads not yet above
 its gates
 Where I shall see them festering if I
 live. [Exeunt.

SCENE V. — EDINBURGH: A ROOM IN
 THE PROVOST'S HOUSE.

Enter MAITLAND and PROVOST.

Maitland. Are the gates fast?

Provost. Ay; but the street yet
 seethes

With ebb and flow of fighting faces
 thronged,

And crush of onset following on her
 heel

Where she came in, and whence at her
 own call

You drove them off her; and above
 the ranks

Flaps the flag borne before her as she
 came,

Wrought with the dead king's likeness;
 and their cry

Is yet to burn or drown her. It were
 but

A manlike mercy now for men to show,
 That she should have some woman's
 hand of hers

To tend her fainting who should be
 nigh dead

With fear and lack of food and wear-
 iness.

Maitland. Nay, if she die not till she
 die for fear,

She must outlive man's memory: twice
 or thrice

As she rode hither with that sable flag
 Blown overhead whereon the dead man
 lay

Painted, and by him beneath a garden
 tree

His young child kneeling, with soft
 hands held up,

And the word underwritten of his
 prayer, —

Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord, —
she seemed

At point to swoon, being sick with two
days' fast,

And with faint fingers clung upon the
rein,

And gaped as one athirst with foodless
lips

And fair head fainting; but for very
scorn

Was straightway quickened and uplift
of heart,

And smote us with her eyes again, and
spoke

No weaker word but of her constant
mind

To hang and crucify, when time should
be,

These now her lords and keepers; so
at last

Beneath these walls she came in with
the night,

So pressed about with foes that man by
man

We could but bring her at a foot's pace
through

Past Kirk of Field between the roaring
streets,

Faint with no fear, but hunger and
great rage,

With all men's wrath as thunder at her
heel,

And all her fair face foul with dust and
tears,

But as one fire of eye and cheek that
shone

With heat of fiery heart and unslaked
will

That took no soil of fear.

Provost. What shall be done
When sentence shall pass on her?

Maitland. By my will,
She shall not die, nor lose her royal
name,

Wherein the council only shall bear
rule,

And take to its own hand the care to
wreak

On her false lord now fled our general
wrong,

Who being but overtaken of its sword
Shall be divorced at once from her and
life.

Provost. But this shall not content
the common will,
Nor theirs who bind and loose it with
their tongues

And cry now for her blood; the town
is loud

With women's voices keener than of men
To call for judgment on her and swift
death

Sharp as their anger.

Maitland. Ay, the time is mad
With noise of preachers and the femi-
nine spleen

That of mere rage and blind mobility
Barks in brute heat for blood; but on
these tongues

The state yet hangs not, nor the general
weal

Is swayed but by the violent breath of
these.

Here sits she safe.

Provost. I would I knew it; her
mood

Is as a wind that blows upon a fire,
And drives her to and fro: she will not
eat,

But rages here and there, and cries
again

On us for traitors, on her friends for
help,

On God for comfort of her cause and
crown

That of his foes and hers is violated,
And will not stint her clamors, nor
take rest,

For prayer nor bidding.

Maitland. I will speak with her
Ere I go hence; though she were mild
of mood,

The task were hard with Knox for
opposite

To bend the council to such policy
As might assure her but of life, which
thus

She whets the weapon in his tongue to
take. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VI. — ANOTHER ROOM IN THE
SAME.

The QUEEN and an ATTENDANT.

Queen. Wilt thou be true? but if
thou have not heart,

Yet do not, being too young to sell
man's blood,
Betray my letter to mine enemies' hands
Where it should be a sword to smite
me with;

If thou lack heart, I say, being but a
boy,
Swear not and break thine oath: but if
thou have,
Thou shalt not ask, for this mine errand
done,

The thing I will not give thee. At
Dunbar
Bring but this letter to my husband's
hand;

Spare for no speed; if it were possible,
I would it might be with him ere day
dawn

On me condemned of men. I have no
hope,

Thou seest, but in thee only: thou art
young,

And mean of place, but be thou good
to me

And thou shalt sit above thy masters
born

And nobles gray in honor. Wilt thou go?
Have here mine only jewel, and my
faith

That I plight to thee, when my hand
may choose,

To give thee better gifts. Haste, and
so thrive

As I by thee shall. [*Exit Attendant.*]

Though thou play me false,
Thou dost no more than God has done
with me,

And all men else before thee: yet I
could not

But write this worthless one word of
my love,

Though I should die for writing it in
vain,

And he should never read it.

Enter MAITLAND.

Come you not
To tell me of my commons and your
friends,

That by their will despite you I must
die?

It were no stranger now than all things
are

That fall as on me dreaming.

Maitland. Madam, no:
I come to plead with you for your own
life,

Which wrath and violent mood would
cast away.

Queen. What is my life to any man
or me

As ye have made it? If ye seek not
that,

Why have ye torn me from my hus-
band's hand,

With whom ye know that I would live
and die

With all content that may be in the
world?

Maitland. For your own honor have
we sundered you.

You know not him, who late writ word
—myself

Can show this letter—to the Lady
Jane,

She was his wife and you his concubine,
No more but sport and scandal in his
sheets,

And loved for use but as a paramour,
And for his ends to rise and by your
lips

Be kissed into a kingdom; and each
week

Since they were first but as in show
divorced

And but of craft divided, on some days
Have they held secret commerce to
your shame

As wedded man and wife.

Queen. There is one thing
That I would ask of even such friends
as you,—

To turn me with my lord adrift at sea,
And make us quit of all men.

Maitland. For yourself,
You drive on no less danger here of
wreck,

Seeing for your life if England take no
care

France will nor strike nor speak; and
had you not

In your own kindly kingdom yet some
friends

Whose hearts are better toward you,
these wot well

You have none left you helpful in the
world.

Yet what we may will I and all these
do

To serve you in this strait; so for this
night

Let not your peril, which can breed
not fear,

For that breed anger in you; and fare-
well. *[Exit.]*

Queen. None but such friends? O
yet my living lord,

O still my comfort, hadst thou none
but me

As I save thee have no man, we would
go

Hand fast in hand to dreadless death,
and see

With such clear eyes as once our mar-
riage-bed

Fire, or the sword's light lifted to make
end

Of that one life on both our lips that
laughed

To think he could not sunder them who
smote,

Nor change our hearts who chilled
them; we would kiss,

Laugh, and lie down, and sleep: but
here in bonds

I will not tamely like a dumb thing die
That gives its blood and speaks not.

If I find

No faith in all this people, yet my
curse

Shall through this casement cry in all
their ears

That are made hard against me. — Ho
there! you,

All that pass by, your queen am I that
call:

Have I no friend of all you to turn
back

The swords that point on this bare
breast, the hands

That grasp and hale me by the hair to
death,

By this disowned rent hair that wore
too soon

The kingdom's weight of all this land
in gold?

Have I no friend? no friend?

Voice without. Ay, here was one;
Know you yet him? — Raise up the ban-
ner there,

That she may look upon her lord, and
take

Comfort.

A Woman. What! was not this that
kneels the child

Which hung once at that harlot's breast
now bare,

And should have drunk death from its
deadly milk?

Hide it for shame; bind up the wanton
hair,

Cover the poisonous bosom: here is
none

To kiss the print of that adulterer's
head

Which last lay on it.

Another Voice. Whither is he flown,
Whose amorous lips were bloody, and

left red

The shameless cheek they fed on as
with shame?

Where is your swordsman at your back
to guard

And make your sin strut kinglike?
where his hand

That made this dead man's child kneel
fatherless,

And plead with God against you for
his blood?

Where is your king-killer?

Queen. The day shall be
That I will make this town a fire, and

slake

The flame with blood of all you: there
shall stand

No mark of man, no stone of these its
walls,

To witness what my wrath made ruin
of

That turned it first to smoke, and then
put out

With all your blood its ashes.

Enter PROVOST.

Hear you, sir,
How we are handled of our townsfolk
there,

Being yet in ward of you? but by my
head,

If now by force it fall not, you as these
Shall buy this of me bloodily, and
first

Shall bleed of all whose lives will pay
not me.

Provost. Madam, as you desire to see that day,
Contain yourself: this flame whereon you blow
Will fasten else untimely on your hand,
And leave it harmless toward us. I beseech you,
Though but for hate of us and hope to hurt,
Eat, and take rest.

Queen. I will not: what are ye,
That I should care for hate of you to live
Who care not for the love's sake of my life?

If I shall die here in your hateful hands,
In God's I put my cause, as into them
I yield the spirit that dares all enemies yet

By force to take it from me. Die or live

I needs must at their bidding; but to sleep,

Eat, drink, weep, laugh, speak or keep silence, these

They shall not yet command me till I die. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VII. — THE HIGH STREET.

A Crowd of CITIZENS.

First Citizen. Who says she shall not die?

Second Citizen. Even he that stands
First in this city, Morton: by his doom,
Death shall not pass upon her.

First Citizen. Will he say it?
Yet is this man not all the tongue or hand
That Scotland has to speak or smite with.

Third Citizen. Nay,
When he so spake against their honest voice
Who called for judgment, one arose
that said—
I know not who, but one that spake for God—

That he who came between God's sword and her
Should as a stayer of justice by the sword
Be stricken of God's justice.

First Citizen. What said he?

Third Citizen. No word, but frowned;
and in his eye and cheek
There sprang a fire, and sank again,
as 'twere

For scorn that anger should have leave
to speak,

Though silently; but Maitland writhed
his lip,

And let his teeth grin doglike, and between

There shot some snarling word that
mocked at God,

And at the servants of his wrath, who wait

To see his will done on her, and men's hands

Made ministers to set it forth so broad
That none might pass and read not.

Second Citizen. Why, by this
Part hangs of it already in men's sight:
I have word here from Dunbar, of one
that was

An officer of Bothwell's, and alive
Laird of Blackadder, whom they seized
at sea

Flying from death to deathward, and
brought back

To be nigh rent in pieces of their hands
Who haled him through the streets to hang, and left

Not half a man unbroken or unbruised
To feel the grip o' the gallows.

First Citizen. They did well:
Shall we do worse, that have within our hand

The heart and head of all this evil, her
By whom all guilt looks guiltless till she die

A whore's death or a murderer's, burn
or drown,

And leave more free the common doom
of man

To pass on lesser sins? While she doth live,

How should it speak for shame to bid
men die

For what sin done soever, who might say

She lives and laughs yet in God's face
and eye,

And finds on earth no judgment as do these

Whose bloodiest hands are whiter than
her soul?

Let her die first.

Third Citizen. Ay shall she, if God
put

Upon those lips that never lacked it yet
His fire to burn men's hearts, and make
that tongue

His sword that hath been ever. Yes-
ternight

Came Knox to Edinburgh, and here
should speak

By this among us of the doom to fall
On us or her, that if it bruise her not
Must glance aside against us.

Second Citizen. He is here.

Draw nigh, but make no noise.

Enter JOHN KNOX.

First Citizen. Nay, all the press
Heaves round about him silent.

Others. Sirs, give place;

Make way for Master Knox to stand
and speak

Here in your midst; here is it higher;
give way.

Make room to hear him. Peace there,
and stand still.

John Knox. What word is this that
ye require of man?

Ye that would hear me, what speech
heard of mine

Should lift your hearts up if they sit
not high, —

If they lack life, should quicken? for
this day

Ye know not less than I know that the
Lord

Hath given his enemy to you for a
prey,

His judgment for a fire: what need
have ye,

Or he what need of other tongues to
speak

Than this which burns all ears that
hear on earth

The blast of this day's justice blown
in heaven —

As where is he that hears not? In your
hand

Lies now the doom of God to deal, and
she

Before your face to abide it, in whose
mouth

His name was as a hissing; and had I
The tongues in mine of angels, and
their might,

What other word or mightier should I
seek

Than this to move you? or, should ye
wax cold,

What fuel should I find out to kindle
you?

If God ye hear not, how shall ye hear
me?

Or if your eyes be sealed to know not
her,

If she be fit to live or no, can I

With words unseal them? None so
young of you

But hath long life enough to understand
And reason to record what he hath seen

Of hers and of God's dealings mutually
Since she came in. Then was her

spirit made soft,

Her words as oil, and with her amorous
face

She caught men's eyes to turn them
where she would,

And with the strong sound of her name
of queen

Made their necks bend; that even of
God's own men

There were that bade refuse her not
her will,

Deny not her, fair woman and great
queen,

Her natural freedom born, to give God
praise

What way she would, and pray what
prayers; though these

Be as they were, to God abominable
And venomous to men's souls. So

came there back

The cursed thing cast forth of us,
and so

Out of her fair face and imperious eyes
Lightened the light whereby men walk

in hell.

And I that sole stood out, and bade not
let

The lightning of this curse come down
on us

And fly with feet as fire on all winds
blown

To burn men's eyes out that beheld
God's face,

<p>That being long blind but now gat sight, and saw, And praised him seeing; I that then spake and said, Ten thousand men here landed of our foes Were not so fearful to me on her side As one mass said in Scotland; that withstood The man to his face I loved, her father's son, Then mastered by the pity of her, and made Through that good mind not good,—who then but I Was taxed of wrongful will, and for hard heart Miscalled of men? And now, sirs, if her prayer Were just and reasonable, and unjust I That bade shut ears against it; if the mass Hath brought forth innocent fruit, and in this land Wherein she came to stablish it again Hath stablished peace with honor; if in her It hath been found no seed of shame, and she That loved and served it seem now in men's sight No hateful thing nor fearful; if she stand Such a queen proven as should prove honorable The rule of women, and in her that thing Be shown forth good that was called evil of me, Blest and not curst,—then have I sinned, and they That would have crossed me would have crossed not God: Whereof now judge ye. Hath she brought with her Peace, or a sword? and since her in-coming Hath the land sat in quiet, and the men Seen rest but for one year? or came not in Behind her feet, right at her back, and shone</p>	<p>Above her crowned head as a fierier crown, Death, and about her as a raiment wrapt Ruin? and where her foot was ever turned Or her right hand was pointed, hath there fallen No fire, no cry burst forth of war, no sound As of a blast blown of an host of men For summons of destruction? Hath God shown For sign she had found grace in his sight, and we For her sake favor, while she hath reigned on us, One hour of good, one week of rest, one day? Or hath he sent not for an opposite sign Dissensions, wars, rumors of wars, and change, Flight and return of men, terror with power, Triumph with trembling? Hath one foot stood fast, One head not bowed, one face not veiled itself, One hand not hidden? Was this once or twice That ye beheld, this brief while of her reign, Strong men one day make mouths at God, the next Lie where his foes lie fallen? or since she came Have ye seen raised up of them and cast down But one or two that served her? Which of these, Which of them all that looked on her and loved, And men spake well of them, and pride and hope Were as their servants,—which of all them now Shall men speak well of? How fared he the first Hailed of his own friends and elect her lord, Who gave her kinsmen heart and godless hope</p>
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By him to reign in her and wield this land,	With suchlike psalms go suchlike soul- to God
Yet once with me took counsel and sought grace,	Naked, — and in his blood she washed her feet
And suddenly God left him, and he stood	Who sat and saw men spill it; and this reward
Brain-smitten, with no bride-bed now nor throne	Had this man of his dancing. For the next,
To conquer, but go senseless to his grave,	On him ye know what hand was last year laid, —
The broken-witted Hamilton, — what end,	David, the close tongue of the Pope, the hand
Think ye, had this man? Or what hope and hap	That held the key of subtle and secret craft
The next whose name met on men's lips with hers,	As of his viol, and tuned all strings of state
And ballads mourned him in his love's sight slain, —	With cunning finger; not the foot o' the king
Gordon, that in the dawn of her dark day	Before God's ark when Michal mocked at him
Rose northward as a young star fiery red,	Danced higher than this man's heart for confidence
Flashed in her face, and fell, for her own breath	To bring from Babylon that ark again Which he that touches, he shall surely die, —
Quenched him? What good thing gat they for her sake,	But not the death of Uzzah; for thereon
These that desired her, yet were mighty lords,	God's glory rests not, but the shadow of death,
Great in account of great men? So they twain	And dead men's bones within it: yet his trust
Perished; and on men meaner far than these	Was to lift up again and to relume The tabernacle of Moloch, and the star Of Remphan, figures which our fathers made,
When this queen looked, how fared they? folk that came	That such as he might go before, and play
With wiles and songs and sins from oversea,	On timbrels and on psalteries and on harps,
With harping hands and dancing feet, and made	On cornets and on cymbals; and the Lord
Music and change of phrases in her ear, —	Brake him; and she being wroth at God took thought
White rose out of the south, star out of France,	How they that saw might call his place of death
Light of men's eyes and love! yea, verily,	The breach of David, and her heart waxed hot
Red rose out of the pit, star out of hell, Fire of men's eyes and burning! for the first	Till she should make a breach upon his foes
Was caught as in a chamber snare, and fell	As God on him, and with a dire new name
Smiling, and died with <i>Farewell, the most fair</i>	And a new memory quite put out that name
<i>And the most cruel princess in the world. —</i>	

And memory of his slaying; yea, all
 this land,
 That hath seen evil of many men before
 And sins of many years, hath seen till
 now
 No sin as hers, nor on her forefathers
 Whose hands were red and their hearts
 hard hath seen
 The note of such an evil as in her
 heart
 Became a fire conceiving, and brought
 forth
 The deed that in her hand was as a
 sword
 New tempered in that fire. For no
 such deed
 Was this as all theirs who play false
 or slay,
 Take gifts for whoredom, or lay snares
 to kill;
 But she gave gifts to hire her lover's
 knife
 That it might pierce her husband: even
 this land—
 This earth whereof our living limbs are
 made,
 This land renewed of God, this earth
 redeemed,
 With all souls born therein to worship
 him
 That call it mother—was the hire she
 gave
 To fee the adulterer's hand when it
 should rise
 Against her lord to slay him; yea, all
 of you,
 And each part of this kingdom, and
 each man
 That but draws breath within her range
 of reign,
 Were parcel of this hire, as counted
 coins
 To make the sum up of her goodly gift.
 And he that of their hands was bought
 and sold,
 Her wedded husband, that had bowed
 his head
 Before her worshipped idol,—think ye
 not
 That by her hand God gave him all his
 wage
 Who was a less thing in his eyes than
 she,

And viler than her service? for the fire
 Fell not from heaven that smote him,
 yet not less
 Was kindled of God's wrath than of
 man's hate,
 And in a woman's craft his will put
 forth
 To make her sin his judgment. But of
 these,
 The slain and slayer, the spoiler and
 the spoiled,
 That each have lain down by her wed-
 ded side,
 Which will ye say hath slept within her
 bed
 A sleep more cursed, and from more
 evil dreams
 Found a worse waking? he that with a
 blast
 Which rent the loud night as a cry
 from hell
 Was blown forth darkling from her
 sheets, or he
 That shared and soiled them till this
 day whereon
 God casts him out upon the track of
 Cain
 To flee forever with uncleansed red
 hands,
 And seek and find not where in the
 waste world
 To hide the wicked writing on his brow
 Till God rain death upon him? for his
 foot,
 Be sure, shall find no rest, his eye no
 sleep,
 His head no covert and his heart no
 hope,
 His soul no harbor and his face no
 light;
 But as a hound the wolf that bleeds to
 death
 God's wrath shall hunt him through
 the dark, and fear
 Shall go before him as a cloud by day,
 By night a fire, but comfort not his
 head
 By day with shadow, nor with shine by
 night
 Guide lest his foot be dashed against a
 stone,
 But in fair heaven before the morning's
 face

<p> Make his air thick with thunder, and put out All lamplike eyes of stars that look on him, Till he lie down blind in the dust, and die. Or if God haply give his lightnings charge They hurt him not, and bid his wind pass by And the stroke spare him of the bolted cloud, Then seeing himself cast out of all that live, But not of death accepted, everywhere An alien soul and shelterless from God, He shall go mad with hate of his own soul, Of God and man and life and death, and live A loathlier life and deadlier than the worm's That feeds on death, and when it rots from him Curse God and die. Such end have these that loved; And she that was beloved, what end shall she? What think ye yet would God have done with her, Who puts her in our hand to smite or spare That hath done all this wickedness? For these, What were they but as shadows in the sun Cast by her passing, or as thoughts that fled Across her mind of evil, types and signs Whereby to spell the secret of her soul Writ by her hand in blood? What power had they, What sense, what spirit, that was not given of her, Or what significance or shape of life Their act or purpose, formless else and void, Save as her will and present force of her Gave breath to them and likeness? None of these Hath done or suffered evil save for her, </p>	<p> Who was the spring of each man's deed or doom And root for each of death, and in his hand The sword to die by and the sword to slay. Shall this be left, then, naked in the world For him that will to stab our peace to death? What blood is this drips from the point, what sign, What scripture is enamelled on the blade? Lo, this fair steel forged only to divide This land from truth, and cut her soul in twain, To cleave the cords in sunder that hold fast Our hope to heaven and tie our trust to God, — Here by the hilt we hold it, and well know That if we break not, this now blunted edge, Being newly ground and sharpened of men's hands That watch if ours will yet loose hold of it, Shall pierce our own hearts through Ay, be ye sure, If ye bid murder and adultery live, They live not stingless; not a Scot that breathes, No man of you nor woman, but hath part In each her several sin and punishment That ye take off from her. But what are these That with their oaths or arms would fence her round, And hide her from God's lightnings? Know they not — Or if they know not, will ye too be blind? — What end that Lord who hath bowed so many a head, So many and mighty, of those her former friends, Hath power to make of these men? Shall they stand, Because they have done God service while they would, </p>
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<p>And cease to serve him? or their good deeds past Who served not God as Job forsooth for naught Sustain their feet from falling? Strength nor craft, Nor praise nor fear nor faith nor love of men, Shall be for buckler to them, nor his name A helm of vantage for the Douglas' head If he make stiff against the yoke of God Too proud a neck, that for the curb cast off May feel the weight and edge that iron hath, To check high minds and chasten; nor his wit Nor subtle tongue shall be for Leth- ington But as a pointless and unfeathered shaft Shot heavenward without hurt, that falls again In the archer's eye to pierce it; and his lips That were so large of mockery when God spake, By present organ of his works and wrath And tongueless sound of justice audi- ble, Shall drink the poison of their words again, And their own mocks consume them; and the mouth That spat on Christ, now pleading for his foes, Be stricken dumb as dust. Then shall one say, Seeing these men also smitten, as ye now Seeing them that bled before to do her good, God is not mocked; and ye shall surely know What men were these and what man he that spake The things I speak now prophesying, and said That if he spare to shed her blood for shame,</p>	<p>For fear or pity of her great name or face, God shall require of you the innocent blood Shed for her fair face' sake, and from your hands Wring the price forth of her blood- guiltiness. Nay, for ye know it, nor have I need again To bring it in your mind if God ere now Have borne me witness: in that dreary day When men's hearts failed them for pure grief and fear To see the tyranny that was, and rule Of this queen's mother, where was no light left But of the fires wherein his servants died, I bade those lords that clave in heart to God, And were perplexed with trembling and with tears, Lift up their hearts, and fear not; and they heard What some now hear no more, the word I spake Who have been with them, as their own souls know, In their most extreme danger: Cowper Moor, Saint Johnston, and the Craggs of Edin- burgh, Are recent in my heart; yea, let these know, That dark and dolorous night wherein all they With shame and fear were driven forth of this town Is yet within my mind; and God for- bid That ever I forget it. What, I say, Was then my exhortation, and what word Of all God ever promised by my mouth Is fallen in vain, they live to testify Of whom not one that then was doomed to death Is perished in that danger; and their foes,</p>
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How many of these hath God before
 their eyes
 Plague-stricken with destruction! lo the
 thanks
 They render him, now to betray his
 cause
 Put in their hands to stablish; even
 that God's
 That kept them all the darkness through
 to see
 Light, and the way that some now see
 no more,
 But are gone after light of the fen's
 fire,
 And walk askant in slippery ways; but
 ye
 Know if God's hand have ever when I
 spake
 Writ liar upon me, or with adverse
 proof
 Turned my free speech to shame; for
 in my lips
 He put a word, and knowledge in my
 heart,
 When I was fast bound of his enemies'
 hands
 An oarsman on their galleys, and be-
 held
 From off the sea whereon I sat in
 chains
 The walls wherein I knew that I there
 bound
 Should one day witness of him; and
 this pledge
 Hath God redeemed not? Nay then,
 in God's name,
 If that false word fell unfulfilled of
 mine,
 Heed ye not now nor hear me when
 I say
 That for this woman's sake shall God
 cut off
 The hand that spares her as the hand
 that shields,
 And make their memory who take part
 with her
 As theirs who stood for Baal against
 the Lord
 With Ahab's daughter; for her reign
 and end
 Shall be like Athaliah's, as her birth
 Was from the womb of Jezebel, that
 slew

The prophets, and made foul with blood
 and fire
 The same land's face that now her seed
 makes foul
 With whoredoms and with witchcrafts;
 yet they say
 Peace, where is no peace, while the
 adulterous blood
 Feeds yet with life and sin the murder-
 ous heart
 That hath brought forth a wonder to
 the world
 And to all time a terror; and this blood
 The hands are clean that shed, and
 they that spare
 In God's just sight spotted as foul as
 Cain's.
 If then this guilt shall cleave to you
 or no,
 And to your children's children, for her
 sake,
 Choose ye; for God needs no man that
 is loath
 To serve him, and no word but his own
 work
 To bind and loose their hearts who
 hear and see
 Such things as speak what I lack words
 to say.
First Citizen. She shall not live.
Second Citizen. If by their mouths to-
 day
 She be set free from death, then by
 our hands
 She dies to-morrow.
Voices in the crowd. Nay, to fire with
 her!
 Fire for the murderess! cast her bones
 in the lake!
 Burn, burn and drown! She shall not
 live to-night.

SCENE VIII. — A ROOM IN THE PRO-
 VOST'S HOUSE.

The QUEEN, ATHOL, and MORTON.

Queen. I will not part from hence:
 here will I see

What man dare do upon me.

Athol. Hear you not

How the cry thickens for your blood!
 This night

Scarce has time left to save you.

Queen. I will die.

Morton. Madam, your will is no more
now the sword
That cuts all knots in sunder : you must
live,
And thank the force that would not
give you leave
To give your foes the blood they seek
to spill.
Here every hour's is as an arrow's
flight

Winged for your heart; if in these
clamorous walls
You see this darkness by the sun cast
out,
You will not see his light go down
alive.

Queen. What men are ye then, that
have made my life
Safe with your oaths, that walled it
round with words,
Fenced it with faith, and fortified it
with air
Made of your breaths and honors?
When ye swore,
I knew the lie's weight on your lips,
and took
My life into mine hand; I had no
thought

To live or ride among you but to death,
And whither ye have led me, to what
end,
Nor I nor God knows better than I
knew
Then when ye swore me safe; for then
as now
I knew your faith was lighter than my
life,
And my life's weight a straw's weight
in the wind
Of your blown vows. Pledge me your
faith to this,
That I shall die to-night if I go forth,
And if I stay live safe, and I will
go
In trust to live, being here assured to
die.

Morton. We swore to save you as
you swore again
To cast the traitor from you, and
divorce
Your hand forever from the blood on
his;

And with that hand you wrote to him
last night

Vows of your love and constant heart
till death

As his true wife to serve and cleave to
him.

The boy that should have borne your
letter lacked

Faith to be trusty to your faithless
trust,

And put it in our hand.

Queen. Why, so I thought :

I knew there was no soul between these
walls,

Of child or man, that had more faith
than ye

Who stand their noblest; nor shall one
soul breathe,

If here ye put not out my present life,
When I come back, that shall not burn
on earth

Ere hell take hold of it.

Morton. It is well seen,

Madam, that fear nor danger can pluck
forth

Your tongue that strikes men mad with
love or scorn,

Taunted or tempted; yet it shall not
wrest

Death from men's hands untimely:
what was sworn,

That you should live, shall stand; and
that it may,

To-night must you part hence; this
lord and I

Will bring you through to Holyrood
afoot,

And be your warders from the multi-
tude

As you pass forth between us; thence
to Leith,

And there shall you take water, and ere
dawn

Touch at Burntisland, whence some
twenty miles

Shall bear you to Lochleven and safe
guard

On the Fife border. He that has your
charge

Is one not trusted more than tried
of us,—

Sir William Douglas; in whose moth-
er's ward

At Kinross there shall you abide what
 end
 God shall ordain of troubles. At this
 need
 No kindlier guard or trustier could
 secure
 The life we pluck out of the popular
 mouth
 That roars agape to rend it. You must
 go.

Queen. Must I not too go barefoot?
 Being your queen,
 Ye do me too much grace: I should be
 led
 In bonds between you, with my written
 sins
 Pinned to my forehead, and my naked
 shame
 Wrapt in a shameful sheet: so might I
 pass,
 If haply I might pass at all alive
 Forth of my people's justice, to salute
 With seemly show of penance her
 chaste eyes
 Whom ye have chosen for guard upon
 her queen
 And daughter of the king her para-
 mour,
 Whose son being called my brother I
 must call,
 Haply, to win her favor and her son's,
 And her good word with him as media-
 tress,
 My father's harlot mother. Verily,
 Ye are worthy guardians of fair fame,
 and friends
 Fit to have care of reputation, men
 That take good heed of honor; and the
 state
 That hath such counsellors to comfort it
 Need fear no shame nor stain of such
 reproach
 As makes it shrink when with her
 lords' good will,
 Advised of all tongues near her and
 approved,
 A queen may wed the worthiest born
 of men
 Her subjects, and a warrior take to wife
 One that being widowed of his hand
 and help
 Were such a thing as I am. From my
 lord

I held my kingdom: now my hand
 lacks his,
 What queen am I, and what slaves ye,
 that throng
 And threat my life with vassals, to
 make vile
 Its majesty foregone with abject fear
 Of my most abject? Yet though I lack
 might
 Save of a woman friendless and in
 bonds,
 My name and place yet lack not, nor
 the state
 And holy magic that God clothes withal
 The naked word of king or queen, and
 keeps
 In his own shadow, hallowed in his
 hand,
 Such heads unarmed as mine, that men
 may smite
 But no man can dis-hallow. In this
 faith,
 Not to your faith I yield myself for
 fear,
 But gladly to that God's who made of
 me
 What ye nor no man mightier shall
 unmake,—
 Your queen and mistress. Lead me
 through my streets,
 Whose stones are tongues now crying
 for my blood,
 To my dead fathers' palace, that hath
 oped
 On many kings and traitors. It may be
 I shall not see these walls and gates
 again
 That cast me out; but if alive or dead
 I come back ever to require my part
 And place among my fathers, on my
 tomb
 Or on my throne shall there stand
 graved for aye
 The living word of this day's work and
 that
 Which is to wreak me on it; and this
 town
 Whence I go naked in mine enemies'
 hands
 Shall be the flame to light men's eyes
 that read
 What was endured and what revenged
 of me.

ACT V. — THE QUEEN.

Time: From July 20, 1567, to May 16, 1568.

SCENE I. — HOLYROOD.

MORTON and MAITLAND.

Morton. I know not yet if we did
well to lay
No public note of murder on the queen
In this our proclamation that sets forth
But the bare justice of our cause, and
right

We had to move against her; while
her act

Stands yet unproven, and seen but by
surmise,—

Though all but they that will not seem
to know

May know the form and very life of
it,—

She hath a sword against us and a stay
In the English hearts and envious
hands that wait

To strike at us, and take her name to
gild

And edge the weapon of their evil will
Who only are our enemies, and stand
Sole friends of hers on earth; for
France, we see,

Will be no screen nor buckler for her,
though

Fire were now lit to burn her body, or
steel

Ground sharp to shear her neck: from
Catherine's mouth

Had Murray not assurance, and from
him

Have we not word that France will
stir no foot

To save or spill her blood? England
alone

By her new-lighted envoy sends rebuke
Made soft and mixed with promise and
with pledge

Of help and comfort to her against our
part

Who by this messenger imperiously
Are taxed and threatened as her traitors: this

Must we now answer with a brow as
free

And tongue as keen, seeing how his
queen in him

Desires the charge and wardship of our
prince

Which we must nowise grant.

Maitland. For fear's sake, no,
Nor for her threats, which rather may
pluck on

More present peril, of more fiery foot,
To the queen's life; yet surer might
we stand

Having the crown's heir safe and girt
about

With foreign guard in a strange land,
than here

Rocked in the roar of factions, his frail
head

Pillowed on death and danger; which
once crushed,

And that thin life cut off, what hand
puts forth

To take the crown up by successive
right

But theirs that would even now dip
violent hand

In the dear heart's blood of their kins-
woman,

That it might take this kingdom by the
throat

When she were slain? and rather by
our mean

Would they procure her slaying than
by their own

Make swift the death which they desire
for her,

And from our hands with craft would
draw it down

By show of friendship to her and threat
of arms

That menace us with mockery and false
fear

Of her deliverance by their swords,
whose light

Being drawn and shining in our eyes
should scare

Our hearts with doubt of what might
fall if she

Stood by their help rekingdomed, and
impel

Even in that fear our hands to spill her
blood

That lag too long behind their wish,
who wait

Till seeing her slain of us they may rise up	Her menace that makes cold no vein of ours
Heirs of her cause and lineage, and reclaim	May heat instead the centre and the core
By right of blood and justice and re- venge	Of this land's pulse with fire, and in that flame
The crown that drops from Stuart to Hamilton	The life we seek not and the crown it wears
With no more let or thwart than a child's life	Consume together. France will rest our friend,
Whose length should be their pleas- ure's and with these	Whether the queen find grace to live in bonds,
Against our cause will England league herself	Or bleed beneath our judgment; he that comes
If yet the queen live prisoner of our hands,	On errand thence to reconcile with us
And these her kin draw swords for her; but they,	Her kin that stand yet on the adverse part
Though England know not of it, nor have eye	Hath but in charge to do her so much good
To find their drift, would mix their cause with ours,	As with our leave he may, and break no bond
If from the queen's head living we should pluck	That holds us firm in friendship; if we will,
The royal office, and as next in blood Instate them regents; who would reign indeed	She may be held in ward of France, and live
Rather by death's help, if they might, and build	Within the bound there of a convent wall
On her child's grave and hers their regency,	Till death redeem her; but howe'er he speed
Than rule by deputation; yet at need Will be content by choice or leave of us	Who hath commission with what power he may
To take the delegated kingdom up And lack but name of king: which being installed	To make of our twain factions one such league
I doubt they think not long to lack, or live	As may stand fast and perfect friend with France,
Its patient proxies ever. So the land, Shaken and sundered, looks from us to these,	And in what wise by grace of us he may
From these again to us-ward, and hears blown	To do our prisoner service and entreat That grace to drop upon her, this main charge
Upon the light breath of the doubtful hour	He needs must keep, to hold allied in one
Rumors of fear which swell men's hearts with wrath	Scotland and France, and let our hand not plight
To hear of southern wars and counsels hatched	Fresh faith instead with England; so for us
That think with fright to shrink them up, and bind	From France looks forth no danger though she die,
Their blood's course fast with threats. Let England know,	For her no help; and these void Eng- lish threats,
	That bring no force to back them but their own

And find not us unfriended, do but
 blow
 The embers that her life still treads
 upon
 Which being enkindled shall devour it.
Morton. Ay,
 And each day leaves them redder from
 the breath
 That through the land flies clamorous
 for her blood
 From lips which boast to bear upon
 them laid
 The live coal burning of the word that
 God
 Gives them to speak against her; the
 south towns
 Are full of tongues that cry on our
 delay
 To purge the land plague-stricken with
 her life;
 He first who never feared the face of
 man,
 John Knox, and Craig his second, fill
 men's ears
 With words as arrows edged and winged
 to slay;
 And all the wide-mouthed commons,
 and more loud
 The women than their men, stretch
 their shrill throats
 With cries for judgment on her: and
 herself,
 As parcel of the faction for her death,
 Takes part with them against her
 friends, and swears
 To the English envoy who was charged
 by stealth
 To plead with her for mercy on her life
 And privily persuade her, as we find,
 To cast out Bothwell from her secret
 thought,
 She would die first ere so divorce her
 soul
 From faith and hope that hangs on him,
 and feeds
 Her constant spirit with comfort which
 sustains
 His child alive within her; for she
 thinks
 Haply to move men's hearts even by
 the plea
 That hardens them against her, being
 believed,

For the false fruit's sake of her fatal
 womb,
 The seed of Bothwell, that with her
 should burn
 Rather than bring forth shame, and in
 this land
 Become a root of wars unborn and fire
 Kindled among our children.
Maitland. Nay, this plea
 Can be but somewhile to defend her
 life,
 And put back judgment: never could
 she think,
 Though love made witless whom the
 world found wise,
 His seed might reign in Scotland.
Morton. We are not
 So barren of our natural brood of kings
 As to be grafted from so vile a stock,
 Though he were now cut off who grows
 yet green
 Upon the stem so shaken and pierced
 through
 With cankers now that gnaw the grain
 away.
 Nor if the child whom, whatsoever
 he be,
 We for the kingdom's comfort needs
 must seem
 To take for true-begotten, and receive
 As issued of her husband's kingly blood,
 Should live not to take up with timely
 hand
 The inheritance whereto we hold him
 born;
 Should the crown therefore by his death
 derive
 To the queen's kin, or hand of Hamil-
 ton
 Assume the state and sway that slides
 from his,—
 His father hath a brother left alive,
 The younger son of Lennox, who might
 put
 More hopefully his nephew's title on
 Than leave it for the spoil of hungry
 hands
 That would make war upon our present
 state,
 Unseat the rule of stablished things,
 unmake
 The counsel and the creed whereby we
 stand,

And Scotland with us, firm of foot and free
Against the whole face of the weaponed world :

But this boy's crown shall be a golden ring

To hoop and hold our state and strength in one,

And with the seemly name of king make sure

The rent bulk of our laboring commonwealth,

And solder its flawed sides; his right of reign

Is half our gift who reign in him, and half

His heritage of blood, whose lineal name

Shall not by note of usurpation strike
With strangeness or offence the world's wide ear

That hears a Stuart our prince's uncle crowned

In the dead child's succession, and this state

Made safe in him and stable to sustain
What chance abroad may range or breed at home

Of force to shake it.

Maitland. While the child lives yet,
A nearer hope than of his father's kin

Looks fairer on us; yet in that life's wreck

This rope might hold at need.

Morton. Ay, or we fall,
Who stand against the house of Hamilton

In this man's name, — his kinsman Ruthven, Mar,

Myself and Athol, who sustain his cause
Against their part alone.

Maitland. So do you well;
Yet had I rather on the queen's appeal,
In her dead father's and her young child's name

Pleading for life, with proffer to resign
Her kingdom to the council's hands or his

Whom it may mark for regent, she might live

Even yet our titular queen, and in her name

The council govern of our trustiest heads;

While in safe ward of England or of France,

Far from his kindred, might her son grow safe,

And under strange and kindlier suns his strength

Wax ripe to bear a kingdom. To this end,

Save Bothwell's life I see no present let,

Who lives her shame and danger, but being slain

Takes off from her the peril of men's tongues,

And her more perilous love that while he lives

It seems will never slacken till her life
Be made a prey for his, but in his death
Dies, or lives stingless after: wherefore most

It now imports us to lay hand on him,
And on that capture to proclaim divorce

Between them ere he die, as presently
His death should seal it and his blood subscribe.

So might she live, and bring against our cause

No blame of men or danger.

Morton. In my mind,
Better it were to crown her son for king,

And send her for safe keeping hence in guard

To live in England prisoner, while we stand

As safe from her as blameless of her blood,

Who reigning but in name on us should reign

Indeed on all our enemies' hopes, and turn

From us the hopeless hearts of half our friends

For the bare name's sake of her seeming reign

And mask of false-faced empire.

Maitland. As I think,
The main mind of the council will not bend

To any reason on our parts proposed

For her removal hence or titular
 reign,
 Nor with the breath of our advice be
 blown
 Beside their purpose. If the queen
 consent
 That her son's head be hallowed with
 her crown,
 And hers he bare before him, she shall
 live,
 And that close record of her secret
 hand,
 The proofs and scriptures in her casket
 locked
 That seal her part in Darnley's blood-
 shedding,
 Shall yet lie dumb in darkness; else, I
 dread,
 She shall be tried by witness in them
 writ,
 And each word there be clamorous on
 men's tongues
 As the doom uttered of her present
 death.
 And not more instant should her judg-
 ment be
 Than her swift execution; for they
 think,
 I know, to find no safety while she
 lives;
 So that in no case shall she pass alive
 Out of this realm while power is in
 their lips
 To speed or stay her.
Morton. They shall never think
 To set before all eyes the whole tale
 forth
 In popular proof and naked evidence
 To plead against her: Balfour, that be-
 trayed
 Her counsels to us, should then have
 done more scathe
 Than ever he did service. They must
 know
 It were not possible to let this proof
 Stand in the sun's sight, and such
 names be read
 For partners of her deed and not her
 doom
 As Huntley's and Argyle's. Have they
 not heard —
 What should suffice to show if there be
 cause

To seal some part yet of this secret
 up —
 How dearly Bothwell held those privy
 scrolls
 Preserved as witness to confound at
 need
 The main part of his judges, and abash
 Their sentence with their clear com-
 plicity
 In the crime sentenced? yea, so dear a
 price
 He set on these, that flying for life he
 sends
 Dalgleish his trustiest servant from
 Dunbar
 To bring again from Balfour's hands to
 his
 The enamelled^d casket in whose silver
 hold
 Lay the queen's letters and the bond
 subscribed
 Which at Craigmillar writ a live man
 dead.
 This was a smooth and seasonable
 hour
 For one of so soft spirit and tender
 heart
 To send and seek, for love of good days
 gone,
 A love-gift that his lady brought from
 France
 To hold sweet scents or jewels; and
 the man
 That to his envoy so delivered it,
 And sent our council warning to way-
 lay
 And where to intercept it, — this was
 one
 Meet for such trust and amorous offices,
 Balfour, that, yielding us the castle
 up,
 Yields likewise for a sword into our
 hands
 To take by stroke of justice the queen's
 life
 His witness with what words she
 tempted him
 From her own lips, how lovingly and
 long,
 To kill her husband; yet he durst not;
 then
 How at her bidding he might well take
 heart,

She said, to do it; yet he stood fearful
 off;
 Whereat she brake into a glimmering
 wrath
 That called him coward, and bade him
 live assured,
 If his tongue ever let this counsel forth,
 By her sure mean and suddenly to
 die.

Maitland. This were a sword to drink
 her life indeed,
 But that my hope is better of the lords
 Than that their heart is fixed upon her
 death;
 And for the commons and their fiery
 tongue,
 The loud-lipped pilot of their windy
 will,
 This famine of their anger shall feed
 full,
 And slake its present need but with the
 spoil
 Made of the piteous remnants of her
 faith
 By the stout hand here of their friend
 Glencairn,
 Who from this chapel of her palace
 rends
 All holy ornament, grinds down with
 steel
 The images whereon Christ dies in
 gold,
 Unsanctifies her sovereign sanctuary,
 Unmoulds her God, and mints and
 marks him new,
 And makes his molten chalices run
 down
 Into strange shape and service: this
 should ease,
 Meseems, the hunger of the hate they
 bear
 That creed for which they held her
 first in hate.
 And, for the secular justice to be done
 For his death's sake whom all these
 loathed alive,
 It should content them that the trial
 has passed
 On those we held in hand, and by this
 test
 The man whose marriage masque on
 that loud night
 Was pretext for the queen to lie apart

From the near danger of her husband's
 bed,
 Sebastian, stands approved as innocent
 And no part of her purpose; while the
 twain
 Who bore the charge that was to load
 with death
 The secret house, and to their master's
 hands
 Consigned the mean of murder, have
 endured
 The perfect proof of torture, and con-
 fessed
 In the extreme pang of evidence en-
 forced
 The utmost of their knowledge.

Morton. These may serve
 To allay men's instant angers; but
 much more
 His face should profit us whom France
 detains
 With suit and proffer from the queen-
 mother
 With all their force and flower of war
 or craft
 To help him to the crown of his own
 land,
 Or throne at least of regency therein,
 If he will take but France for constant
 friend,
 And turn our hearts with his from
 England: this
 Would Catherine give him for his
 friendship's sake
 Who gives her none for all this, but
 his hope
 Cleaves yet to England, though for
 fraud or fear
 Again it fail him. So being foiled and
 wroth,
 He hath, she tells him, a right English
 heart,
 And in that faith withholds him craftily
 From his desired departure and re-
 turn,
 Which should be more of all this land
 desired
 Than of himself. This Elphinstone
 that comes
 For him from Paris, in his master's
 name
 To plead as in her brother's for the
 queen.

Bears but the name of Murray in his
mouth,
Whose present eye and tongue, whose
spirit and mind,
Our need of him requires. When
their intent
Shall by the lords in council be made
known
To him that stands here for Elizabeth,
How in her name will he receive the
word
That but from Murray's lip she thinks
to hear,
And then determine with what large
response
For peace or war she may resolve
herself?

Maitland. If she shall find our coun-
cil one in will
To shed by doom of judgment the
queen's blood,
Even by Throgmorton's mouth I am
certified
That she will call on France to strike
with her
For this their sister's sake, and join in
one
Their common war to tread our treason
down;
Or, if she find not aid of France, from
Spain
Will she seek help to hold our French
allies
With curb and snaffle fast of Spanish
steel,
For fear their powers against her lend
us might
That would not lend against us; she
meantime,
While Philip's hand hath France as by
the hair,
shall loosen on us England, to redeem
That forfeit life which till the day of
fight
Her trust is but in Murray to preserve,
Seeing he spake never word in English
ear
Against this queen his sister.

Morton. Being returned,
He shall bear witness if his heart be
bent
Rather to this queen's love or that
queen's fear

Than to the sole weal of his natura-
land,
That hath more need he should take
thought for her
Than one of these or the other. If the
lords
Be purposed, as I guess, to bid the
queen,
Ere this month end, make choice of
death or life,—
To live uncrowned, and call her young
son king,
Or die by doom attained, — none but
he
By her submission or her death must
rise
Regent of Scotland; and each hour
that flits
With louder tongue requires him, and
rebukes
His tardiness of spirit or foot to flee
By swift and private passage forth of
France
To where our hearts wait that have
need of him.

SCENE II. — LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.

The QUEEN and MARY BEATON.

Queen. I would I knew, before this
day be dead,
If I must live or die. Why art thou
pale?
It seems thou art not sad, though I sit
here,
And thou divide my prison; for I
see
Thine eye more kindled, and thy lip
more calm,
And hear thy voice more steadfast, than
it was
When we were free of body: then the
soul
Seemed to sit heavy in thee, and thy
face
Was as a water's wearied with the
wind,
Dim eye and fitful lip, whereon thy
speech
Would break and die untimely. Do
these walls,
And that wan wrinkling water at their
foot,

For my sake please thee? Thou
shouldst love me well,
Or hate, I know not whether, if to
share

The cup wherein I drink delight the lip
That pledges in it mine.

Mary Beaton. If I be pale,
For fear it is not, nor for discontent,
Here to sit bounded: I could well be
pleased

To shoot my thoughts no farther than
this wall

That is my body's limit, and to lead
My whole life's length as quiet as we
sit

Till death fulfilled all quiet, did I
know

There were no wars without, nor days
for you

Of change and many a turbulent chance
to be

Whence I must not live absent.

Queen. Hast thou part,
Think'st thou, as in time past, predes-
tinate

In all my days and chances?

Mary Beaton. Yea, I know it.

Queen. If thou have grace to proph-
esy, perchance

Canst thou tell too how I shall fare
forth hence,—

If quick or dead? I had rather so
much know

Than if thou love or hate me.

Mary Beaton. Truly, then,
My mind forecasts with no great ques-
tioning

You shall pass forth alive.

Queen. What, to my death?

Mary Beaton. To life, and death that
comes of life at last:

I know not when it shall.

Queen. I would be sure
If our good guardian know no more
than thou:

I think she should; yet if she knew I
think

I should not long desire to know as
much,

But the utmost thing that were of her
foreknown

Should in mine eye stand open.

Mary Beaton. She is kind.

Queen. I would she were a man that
had such heart:

So might it do me service.

Mary Beaton. So it may.

Queen. How? in her son? Ay,
haply, could I bring

Mine own heart down to feed their
hearts with hope,

They might grow great enough to do
me good.

I tell thee yet, I thought indeed to die
When I came hither. 'Tis but five
weeks gone,—

Five, and two days: I keep the count
of days

Here; I can mind the smell of the
moist air

As we took land, and when we got to
horse

I thought I never haply might ride
more,

Nor hear a hoof's beat on the glad
green ground,

Nor feel the free steed stretch him to
the way,

Nor his flank bound to bear me: then
meseemed

Men could not make me live in prison
long;

It were unlike my being, out of my
doom;

Free should I live, or die. Then came
these walls,

And this blind water shuddering at
the sun,

That rose ere we had ten miles ridden;
and here

The black boat rocked that took my
feet off shore,

And set them in this prison; and as I
came

The honey-heavy heather touched my
sense

Well-nigh to weeping: I did think to
die,

And smell naught sweeter than the
naked grave.

Yet sit we not among the worms and
roots,

But can see this much,—from the round
tower here,

The square walls of the main tower
opposite,

And the bare court between; a gracious sight.

Yet did they not so well to let me live,

If they love life too; I will find those friends

That found these walls and fears to fence me with

A narrower lodging than this seven feet's space

That yet I move in, where nor lip nor limb

Shall breathe or move forever.

Mary Beaton. Do you think

You shall not long live bound?

Queen. Impossible.

I would have violent death, or life at large;

And either speedy. Were it in their mind

To slay me here and swiftly, as I thought,

Thou wouldst not here sit by their leave with me:

They get not so much grace who are now to die,

And could not need it; yet I have heard it said

The headsman grants what sort of grace he may—

A grievous grace—to one about to bleed

That asks some boon before his neck lie down;

Thy face was haply such a boon to me, Being cradle-fellows and fast-hearted friends,

To see before I died, and this the gift Given of my headsmen's grace: what think'st thou?

Mary Beaton. Nay,

That I know naught of headsmen.

Queen. Thou hast seen—

It is a sharp, strange thing to see men die.

I have prayed these men for life, thou knowest,—have sent

Prayers in my son's and my dead father's name,

Their kings that were and shall be, and men say

One was well loved of the people, and their love

Is good to have, a goodly stay—and yet

I do not greatly think I fear to die.

I would not put off life yet; if I live, For one thing most shall these men pay me dear,—

That I was ever touched with fear of death.

Thou hast heard how seeing a child on the island once,

Strayed over from the shore, I cried to him

Through the pierced wall, between five feet of stone,

To bid my friends pray God but for my soul,

My body was worth little; and they thought

I was cast down with bitter dread of heart:

Please God, for that will I get good revenge.

I dream no more each night now on my lord,

And yet God knows how utterly I know

I would be hewn in pieces—yea, I think—

Or turned with fire to ashes for his sake:

Surely I would.

Enter LADY LOCHLEVEN.

Lady Lochleven. Good morrow to your grace.

Queen. Good madam, if the day be good or no

Our grace can tell not; while our grace had yet

The grace to walk an hour in the sun's eye

With your fair daughters and our bed-fellows

About your battlements that hold us fast,

Or breathe outside the gateway where our foot

Might feel the terrace under, we might say

The morn was good or ill: being here shut up,

We make no guesses of the sun, but think

To find no more good morrows.

Lady Lochleven. Let your grace
Chide not in thought with me; for this
 restraint,
That since your late scarce intercepted
 flight
Has been imposed upon me, from my
 heart
I think you think that I desired it not.

Queen. Ay, we were fools, we Maries
 twain, and thought
To be into the summer back again,
And see the broom blow in the golden
 world,—

The gentle broom on hill. For all
 men's talk
And all things come and gone yet, yet I
 find

I am not tired of that I see not here,—
The sun, and the large air, and the
 sweet earth,
And the hours that hum like fire-flies
 on the hills

As they burn out and die, and the
 bowed heaven,
And the small clouds that swim and
 swoon i' the sun,
And the small flowers. Now should I
 keep these things
But as sweet matter for my thoughts in
 French.

To set them in a sonnet. here at home
I read too plain in our own tongue my
 doom,

To see them not, and love them.
 Pardon me:

I would have none weep for me but
 my foes,
And then not tears. Be not more dis-
 content

Than I to think that you could deem
 of me

As of one thankless; who were thank-
 less found,
Not knowing that by no will or work of
 yours

I sit suppressed thus from the sun: 'tis
 mine,

My fault that smites me; and my
 masters' will,

Not mine or yours, it is, that for my fault
Devised this penance; which on me
 wrought out

May fall again on them.

Lady Lochleven. Madam, alas!
I came on no such errand to your
 grace

As lacked more words to make it sad
 than those

It was to speak; and these have I put
 back

Too long and idly. Here are now at
 gate

Three messengers sent from the parlia-
 ment

To speak with you.

Queen. With us to speak? you know,
Nor chamberlain nor herald have we
 here

To marshal men before us. Let them
 come,

Whom all our kingdom left could keep
 not out

From this high presence-chamber. Stay:
 I would not

Be stricken unaware, nor find in you
That which I thought not; it were out
 of kind,

Unwomanlike, to give me to their
 hands

Who came to slay me, knowing not
 why they came;

Is it for that?

Lady Lochleven. God's grace forbid
 it! nay—

Queen. I ask if they bring warrant
 for my death?

I have seen such things and heard, since
 leaves bloomed last,

That this were no such marvellous
 thing to hear.

But if this be, before I speak with them,
I will know first.

Lady Lochleven. Let not your high-
 ness dread—

Queen. I do not bid you put me out
 of dread.

Have you not heard, and hear? The
 queen desires

To know of her born subject till she
 die,

And keeper of her prison, if these men
Be come to slay her.

Lady Lochleven. They come to bid
 your grace—

Queen. Bid my grace do their bid-
 ding? that is like:

That I should do it were unlike. I
must live,
I see, this some while yet. What men
are these?

Lady Lochleven. The first, Sir Robert
Melville; then the lords
Ruthven and Lindsay.

Queen. Bid my first friend in,
While one friend may be bidden; he, I
think,
Can come but friendlike.

[*Exit LADY LOCHLEVEN.*

What should these desire?
One head of theirs I swore last month
to have,

That then beheld me, some day, if that
hand

Whereon I swore should take not first
my life.

And one, the son of him that being nigh
dead

Rose from his grave's edge to pluck
down alive

A murdered man before him,—what
should he

Bring less than murder, being his
father's son,

In such a hand as his that stabbed my
friend?

Mary Beaton. Perchance they come
to take your crown, not life.

Queen. What, my name too? but till
I yield it them,

They have but half the royal thing
they hold,

The state they ravish; and they shall
not have

My name but with my life; while that
sits fast,

As in my will it sits, I am queen, and
they

My servants yet that fear to take my
life;

For so thou seest they fear; and I did
ill,

That in first sight of present-seeming
death

Made offer to resign into their hands
What here is mine of empire: I shall

live,
And being no queen I live not.

Enter SIR ROBERT MELVILLE.

Welcome, sir;

I have found, since ever times grew
strange with me,

Good friends of your good brother and
yourself,

And think to find. What errand have
you hero?

Sir R. Melville. Let not your majesty
cast off the thought

Which calls me friend, though I be
first to bear

An evil errand. 'Tis the council's mind
That you shall live, and in their hand

the proofs
Shall die that plead against you—

Queen. Is this ill?
I know not well what proof that man

could show
Would prove men honest that make

war on faith,
Show treason trusty, bleach rebellion

white,
Bid liars look loyal; and much less I

know
What proof might speak against me

from their lips
Whose breath may kill and quicken

evidence,
Or what good change of mind rebuke

the lie
That lived upon them; but that I must

live,
And of their proofs unspotted, sounds

not worse
Than if a friend had come to bear me

word
That I must die belied.

Sir R. Melville. Upon these terms
Are they content for you to live in

ward:—
That you yield up as with free hand the

crown
And right of kingdom to your son, who

straight
At Stirling shall receive it from their

hands;
Else shall your grace be put to trial,

and bear
The doom ensuing, with what of mortal

weight
May hang upon that sentence.

Queen. Sir, methought
This word of doom for shame's sake

now was dead

Even in their mouths that first it soiled,
 and made
 Even shamelessness astonished; not
 again
 We thought to hear of judgment, we
 that are,
 While yet we are any thing, and yet
 must be,
 The voice which deals, and not the ear
 which takes,
 Judgment. God gave man might to
 murder me,
 Who made me woman, weaker than a
 man;
 But God gave no man right, I think, to
 judge,
 Who made me royal. Come then, I
 will die :
 I did not think to live. Must I die
 here?

Sir R. Melville. Madam, my errand—

Queen. Ay, sir, is received

Here in my heart: I thank you; but
 you know

I had no hope before; yet sounds it
 strange

That should not sound, to die at such
 men's hands,

A queen, and at my years. Forgive
 me, sir :

Me it not comforts to discomfort you,
 Who are yet my friend—as much as
 man on earth—

If any, you—that come to bid me
 die.

Sir R. Melville. Be not cast down so
 deep: I have an errand

From the English queen, your friend,
 and here ensheathed

By my sword's secret side, for your fair
 hand

A letter writ from her ambassador
 Praying you subscribe what thing my
 comrades will,

Since naught whereto your writing was
 compelled

Can hang hereafter on you as a chain
 When but for this bond written you
 stand free.

Queen. Ay, I know that: how speaks
 Elizabeth?

Sir R. Melville. She bids you at all
 times account of her

As a sure friend and helpful; has, I
 know,

Indeed no mind to fail you.

Queen. This your comfort

Is no small comfort to me; I had
 rather

Be bounden to her than any prince
 alive.

Is it her counsel, then, that I subscribe
 My traitors' writing? I will do it. But,

sir,

Of those that sit in state in Edinburgh
 Which was it chose you for my com-
 forter?

I know my lord of Morton would send
 none;

It was the secretary?

Sir R. Melville. Madam, the same.

Queen. Did I not well then, think
 you, when I cast

This body of mine between him and
 the swords

That would have hewn his body? I
 did think

He was my friend. Bid now mine ene-
 mies in,

And I will sign what sort of shame
 they will,

And rid them hence.

*Enter LINDSAY and the younger RUTH-
 VEN.*

'Tis five weeks gone, my lord,

[*To LINDSAY.*

Since last we looked on you; for you,
 fair sir, [*To RUTHVEN.*

A year I think and four good months
 are sped

Since, at that father's back whose name
 you bear,

I saw your face dashed red with blood
 My lords,

Ye come to treat with us ambassa-
 dors

Sent from our subjects; and we cannot
 choose,

Being held of them in bonds from
 whom ye come,

But give you leave to speak.

Lindsay. Thus, briefly, madam:—

If you will live to die no death by
 doom,

This threefold bond of contract that
 we bring

Requires your hand; wherein of your
free wil'

First must you yield the crown of Scot-
land up

To your child's hand; then by this sec-
ond deed

The place and name of regent through
this realm

To the earl of Murray shall you here
assign,

Or, if he list not take this coil in hand,
Then to the council; last, this deed em-
powers

The lords of Mar and Morton with my-
self

To set the crown upon the young king's
head.

These shall you sign.

Queen. These I shall sign, or die.

But hear you, sirs: when hither you
brought these,

Burned not your hearts within you by
the way

Thinking how she that should subscribe
was born

King James's daughter? that this
shameful hand,

Fit to sustain nor sword nor staff o'
the realm,

Hath the blood in it of those years of
kings

That tamed the neck and drove with
spurs the sides

Of this beast people that now casts off
me?

Ay, this that is to sign, no hand but
this

Throbs with their sole inheritance of
life

Who held with bit and bridle this
bound land,

And made it pace beneath them.
What are ye

That I should tell you so, whose fathers
fought

Beneath my fathers? Where my grand-
sire fell,

And all this land about him, were there
none

That bore on Flodden, sirs, such names
as yours,

And shamed them not? Heard no
men past of lords,

That for the king's crown gave their
crown of life

For death to harry? Did these grieve
or grudge

To be built up into that bloody wall
That could not fence the king? Were

no dead found
Of that huge cirque wherein my grand-

sire lay,
But of poor men and commons? Yea,

my lords,
I think the sires that bred you had not

heart
As men have writ of them, but sent to

fight
For them their vassals visored with

their crests,
And these did well, and died, and left

your sires
That hid their heads forever and lived

long,
The name and false name of their deeds

and death.
How should their sons else, how should

ye, being born,
If born ye be, not bastards, of those

lords
Who gat this lying glory to be called

Loyal, and in the reek of a false field
To fall so for my fathers,—how, I say,

Dare sons of such come hither, how
stand here,

From off the daughter's head of all
those kings

To pluck the crown that on my fathers'
heads

Ye say they died to save? I will not
sign:

No, let some Flodden sword dip in my
blood;

Here I sit fast, and die. — Good friend
that was,

[70 SIR R. MELVILLE.

Tell my great sister that you saw my
hand

Strive, and leave off to sign: I had no
skill

To shape false letters.

Ruthven. Madam, no man here
But knows by heart the height of your

stout words
And strength of speech or sweet ~~truss~~

all this breath

Can blow not back the storm yourself
 raised up,
 Whose tempest shakes the kingdom
 from your hand,
 And not men's hate. You have been
 loved of men;
 All faith of heart, all honor possible,
 While man might give, men gave you.
 Now those deeds
 Which none against your will enforced
 you do
 Have set that spirit against you in
 men's minds,
 That till you die (as then your memory
 may),
 Nor your fair beauty nor your fiery
 heart
 Can lay with spells asleep.

Sir R. Melville (aside). I pray you,
 madam,
 Think on mine errand.

Queen. Wherefore should I sign?
 If I be queen that so unqueen myself,
 What shall it profit me to give my foes
 This one thing mine that hallows me,
 this name,
 This royal shadow? If I be no queen,
 Let me bleed here; as being uncrowned
 I know

That I shall die of all your promises.
Lindsay. We came not, madam, to
 put force on you,
 And save your life by violence; but
 take note,

[*Laying his hand on her arm.*
 As in this hand your own is fast, and
 hath

No power till mine give back its power
 again

To strive or sign, so fast are you in
 ward,

For life or death, of them that bid you
 live

And be no queen, or die.

Queen. I thank you, sir,
 That of your love and courtesy have
 set

This knightly sign upon my woman's
 flesh

For proof if I be queen or no, that
 bear

Such writing on my body of men's
 hands

To seal mine abdication. Sirs, read
 here:

What need I sign again? Here may
 men see

If she be queen of Scotland on whose
 arm

Are writ such scriptures as I wist not
 yet

Men's eyes might read on any woman
 born.

Yet will I write, being free, to assure
 myself

This is my hand indeed that wears the
 sign

Which proves it vassal to the stronger.
 Sirs,

Take back your papers; and albeit, my
 lord,

The conquest you have made of me,
 henceforth

Lift up your heart with pride, I pray
 you yet,

Boast not yourself on women overmuch,
 Lest being their conqueror called, and
 praised for that,

Men call you too their tyrant. Once
 and twice

Have we grasped hands: the third
 time they shall cross

Must leave one cold forever. Nay, I
 pray,

Who may command not surely, yet I
 pray,

Speak not, but go: ye have that ye
 came for; go,

And make your vaunt to have found so
 meek a thing

As would yield all, and thank you.

[*Exeunt LINDSAY, RUTHVEN, and S'R*
R. MELVILLE.

Hast thou read
 Of sick men healed with baths of chil-
 dren's blood?

I must be healed of this my plague of
 shame,

This sickness of disgrace they leave
 with me,

Bathing in theirs my body.

Mary Beaton. In such streams

You have washed your hands already.

Queen. What, in war?

Ay, there I have seen blood shed for
 we, and yet

Wept not nor trembled; if my heart
shrink now,
It is for angry pity of myself
That I should look on shame.

Mary Beaton. What shame, my queen?

Queen. Thy queen? why, this, that I,
queen once of Scots,
Am no more now than thine. Call
back the lords:

I will unsign their writing, and here die;
It were the easier end.

Mary Beaton. It is your will —
Forgive me, madam — on this cause
again

To grapple with Lord Lindsay?

Queen. True, not yet;
Thou thought'st to make me mad,
remembering that;
But it hath made me whole. My wits
are sound,
Remembering I must live. When I
have slept,

Say I would gladly see the kindlier
face

Again of our dear hostess with her son
To put those angry eyes out of my
sight

That lightened late upon me; say, being
sad,

And (if thou wilt) being frightened, I
must find

The comfortable charities of friends
More precious to me. 'Tis but truth,
I am fain,

Being tired, to sleep an hour: mine
eyes are hot;

Where tears will come not, fire there
breeds instead,

Thou knowest, to burn them through.
Let me lie down;

I will expect their comforts in an hour.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — HOLYROOD.

MAITLAND and SIR NICHOLAS

THROMORTON.

Thromorton. Why would your coun-
cil give no ear to me

Ere they rode hence so hot to crown
their prince?

Why hear not first one word?

Maitland. One threat the more
From your queen's lips bequeathed by
rote to yours,

Or one more promise? If we run her
course,

This queen will leave us in the briers,
we know,

There to lie fast or labor till the thorns
Have rent our flesh and raiment.

Thromorton. Sir, take thought
If help were sent not at the siege of
Leith,

When France had grasped you by the
throat, and sea

To land gave battle, from that sove-
reign's hand

Whom now ye trust not.

Maitland. Ay, for her own ends
She cast the French out, and flung back
their power

Which here was deadly to her, and of
that deed

Had recompense with surety: but what
aid

Must we now look for of her, on whose
will

Hang all our enemies' hopes? I would
I had been

Banished seven years my country, and
your queen

On that condition had but as a friend
Dealt freely with us. Let her now

proclaim,

Her own seed failing, this our prince
her heir,

And England shall no less have care of
him

Than we his lineal servants; else, if
hence

We yield him to your keeping, men
will say

We have given our natural master to
be kept

As among wolves a sheep, and made
our hope

The fosterling of danger: and small
trust

Should we put in her that has newly
dealt

By secret message to subvert our state,
We know, with those indeed of our
queen's kin

From whose report we know it.

Throgmorton. What have they said?
Maitland. That you brought proffers
 of her aid and love
 To incite their arms, to quicken the
 slow snake
 Whose sting lies cold yet in their policy,
 But watched and warmed of her with
 hand and eye
 The perfect poison should put forth,
 and thrust
 At once the hot and cloven tongue of
 war
 Even in our face and bosom; but for
 fear,
 It may be, or being yet at heart's root
 Scots, —
 For this or that cause, through false
 heart or true,
 So is it, that in doubt of your good
 mind
 Toward them or Scotland, in whose
 breast you sought
 To make the mutual swords of her own
 sons
 Clash as they crossed once more, drink-
 ing her blood,
 They sent us word of all your embassy.
Throgmorton. But you, whate'er these
 thought or feigned to think,
 Think no such foolish evil as fools
 may, —
 Deem not of England as the Scot who
 deems
 She hath no will, no line of life, no
 hope,
 No thought but Scotland's ruin, and
 our queen
 No sense of aught here done, — her
 sister's doom,
 The people's rage, the council's pur-
 pose, — naught
 But where to find in these a guileful
 mean
 To strike at Scotland? why, these fears
 are old,
 White-bearded dreams, suspicions long
 grown gray,
 Dangers and doubts toothless and eye-
 less now
 That fright nor babe nor dotard; and
 your thought
 Finds room for such? What profit
 should she have

To turn your swords against each
 other's throats,
 And pick some privy chance of vantage
 up
 That fell between your factions at her
 feet?
 Such chance indeed of vantage might
 there fall
 For your own queen, who nowise has
 been slow
 To nurse the chance, and wait on it and
 serve,
 From strifes rekindled and requicken-
 ing claims
 Set each at each in England, whence
 or craft
 Or force might filch or seize for Scot-
 land's sake
 Some no less jewel than her eye ere
 now
 Was fixed so fast on, even the crown
 that hangs
 In doubt yet of unsure inheritance,
 As hangs not yours for us to pluck at,
 who,
 Reign whoso may when this queen's
 life is quenched,
 In Scotland shall reign never.
Maitland. That I know,
 And this no less: that he who reigns
 shall reign
 Never by right of England's leave or
 love,
 Her ward or servant; as, this queen
 removed,
 Haply ye hope her lineal heir might
 be,
 And in that hope work with these
 Hamiltons
 To strike at us in Mary's name, and
 pluck
 Death from our hands upon her; you,
 your queen,
 And they her kinsfolk, all ye seek her
 death;
 No word but of her freedom in your
 mouths,
 No end than this less looked for in
 your hearts.
 Speak to the council as but now to me,
 Defy them in her cause, not all the
 world
 For three days' space shall save her

Throgmorton. Nay, not we
Desire the queen's death at your hand
provoked,
But here from Tullibardine's mouth I
know
Her kin at secret heart desire no less;
And will ye but allow their house its
right

By heritage to reign, no need, they say,
To take more care for her, who privily
May be put out of life, and no man
more

In that dead name be troubled; and
again,

If they with no such promise being
assured

Shall not join hands with you, and
England then

Shall bring the queen back whom ye
spared to slay,

Ye are lost, and they not winners.
Therefore is it

That of Lord Mar and of yourself I
seek

Help for the queen's deliverance, who
being dead

Can profit no man but your foes and
ours

That love not England more than they
love you,

Nor you than they love England: shall
not both

With their own cause take part?

Maitland. It is too late;

What part should we take with you, to
what end,

Since all the council knows your traffic
now

With their chief foes, and how being
there betrayed

You can but bring us such a friendship
back

As they would none of?

Throgmorton. Sir, if yet you fear,
If you suspect yet that our queen
desires

To speed the death of yours or make
it sure

By pleading for her, or by threat of war
Denounced for her sake, let this letter
be

The seal and warrant of our single
heart,

Wherein she threatens war, — but smile
not yet, —

If in his mother's name for him dis-
crowned

Ye crown the child that has but wailed
one year.

This should the lords have seen; but
even for doubt

Lest it should set their spirits on such
fire

As but her blood shed presently could
slake,

And this be deemed its aim indeed at
heart

And privy purpose of her hand who
writ,

Your eye alone must read that reads it
now

And the lord Murray's; for they know
that send,

And with it send me this for secret
charge,

They know the truth and heat of fiery
will

That urges our queen's heart upon this
war,

And for no end but for her sake who
sits

Held fast in bonds of her own subjects
born,

And with her all the majesty on earth
That walks with monarchs, and no
king alive

But wears some shameful parcel of her
chain.

Maitland. Though this be truth, yet
they that hold it false

Will join in wrath with them that hold
it true,

Even for the threat's sake and for
shame, will join

To write red answer in the slain
queen's blood

Back to the queen that threatens. Nay,
herself

Who sits in bonds yet of us will not
yield

To come forth singly safe, nor give
consent

That Bothwell should fare worse than
she, or have

More harm or danger; and being thus
incensed,

A three-edged weapon in the council's
hand
Is drawn to smite at need, a treble
charge
Whereon to impeach her: on that stat-
ute first
Made of this land's religion seven
years since,
Which though she signed not, yet its
breach in her
Shall stand for guilt before them; and
thereto
Shall she be challenged of incontinence
With more than Bothwell, who by
noteless nights
Have made her bed adulterous, and of
each
The proof that seals her shame in him,
they say,
Lies in their hand; last, of her mur-
dered lord
Their warrant cries against her; and
from these
No man may think to quit her nor
secure,
Save he that here comes timeliest for
such toil
As none beside may take upon his
hand.

Enter MURRAY.

Welcome, my lord, and to a land that
lacks
As never yet it lacked or looked for
you.
What comfort bring you for her
wounds from France
Besides that present help of hand and
head
We heard returned an hour since?
Murray. Sir, thus much:
All of our faith in France will in our
cause
Live or die fighting; gold, and men in
arms,
Will flow thence on us in full stream
and free
If Scotland set but open hand or breast
To greet them coming; they will buy
our love
At what best price they may.

Throgmorton. But you, my lord,
That have loved England ever, and
that know

The worth and unworth weighed of
either friend,
French faith or English, will not surely
buy
With heavy hate of England the light
love
That France and fraud would sell you;
nor for this
Cast off the fortune and the peace
unborn
That may bind fast in one strong ring
of sea
Two jewels become one jewel, one such
land
As from the stout fort of a single heart
Fixed like a sea-rock might look forth
and laugh
Upon the under wars of all the world,
And see not higher the heads of king-
doms risen
Than of small waves in summer? Will
you pluck
This hope out of the hopeful hand of
time
Ere he can gather, — this good fruit that
grows
On the green present branch of time's
gray tree
To feed the future where the hungry
past
Could get but blood for bread, and with
bare steel
Died starved and smitten?
Murray. Sir, when I came in
By secret flight from France, out of the
guard
Wherein I lived inwalled with watch of
men
That the court set about me to with-
hold
My foot from England; when an Eng-
lish boat
Had borne me oversea by secret night
From privy port to port, — at the long
last
I saw your queen's face darken on mine
own
As on a servant favor-fallen, that came
To take rebuke, and speak not; in her
speech
I found no note of favor, no good word,
Nor honor such as late in France I
found,

And finding fled from: sharply with
 strange eyes
 She glanced against me; taxed me with
 the bonds
 Wherein men held my sister; half a
 threat
 Was all her promise; I returned but
 this,—
 I would be still a Scotsman, and this
 land
 I had more mind to serve, and do her
 good,
 Than either of these queens; so parted
 thence
 Unfriendlie, yet with no breach openly
 Proclaimed of friendship; and being
 here, my mind
 Is yet to serve no mistress but alone
 This earth my bones were bred of, this
 kind land
 Which moulded me and fostered; her
 strong milk
 Put manhood in my blood, and from
 my heart
 If she that nurtured need it now to
 drink
 I think not much to shed it. If those
 lords
 In whom her power now stands shall
 with one mouth
 Bid me put on this weight of regency,
 For no man's fear shall I deny them:
 she,
 Your queen, that threatens me with
 ignominy
 If I obey their choice and call, must
 know
 That to God only and my heart, those
 twain
 That are one eye to know me and to
 judge,
 Will I refer it; and of them being
 known
 That with pure purpose and no soiled
 intent
 I take this charge up, I will bear it
 through
 To the right end. Yet, ere my mind
 be fixed,
 I will behold her that was queen, and
 see
 How sits the spirit within her; but
 howe'er,

Till Bothwell in our hands lie trapped
 and dead
 She must not pass forth free; and we
 will hold
 No traffic for the bear's skin merchant
 like
 Before the bear be caught; but if your
 queen
 Proclaim against us therefore war, be
 sure
 We will not lose our lives, yield up our
 lands,
 And bear repute of rebels through the
 world,
 Who might, how loath soe'er, in all
 men's eyes
 Make our cause clear as righteousness:
 the proofs
 Which in our hands lie darkling yet,
 but bear
 The perfect witness of those ill deeds
 past
 That bring her thus in danger of our
 doom
 And righteous peril of all-judging law,
 Must to the world's eye nakedly set forth
 What cause is hers, and ours; when if
 I stand
 In the king's likeness of the state elect,
 To him in me shall all knees bend, and
 hearts
 Kneel subjected; for them that hold
 apart,
 No head shall stand of any Hamilton
 That shall not bow before my sword or
 me.

SCENE IV. — LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.

The QUEEN and GEORGE DOUGLAS.

Queen. Will he be here to-day? Alas,
 my friend!

I made my hope of this till he should
 come,

And now he comes I would not look
 on him.

I know not what put hope into my fear
 That this your mother's and my father's
 son

Should do me good for evil.

George Douglas. Madam, I think
 The mind can be but good that mar
 shals him

To your fair presence; nay, though
 even his soul
 Were damned so deep as to desire your
 death,
 He durst not come to show us his
 purpose here
 Who were not chosen for murderers
 at his hire,
 But guards and servants that would
 shed their lives
 Ere yours should look on danger.

Queen. That we know,
 And have no better wage than love to
 give,
 Which more to give we grudge not,
 being so poor,
 Than from your queen's hands you
 disdain to take;
 But what knows he? For aught our
 brother knows,
 Your mother and yourself are envious
 guards
 That hate me for my faith as for my
 fault,
 And hold your hands but till he bids
 you slay,
 Or yield me to my slayers. Ah! my
 last knight,
 You shall do well to leave me at my
 need:
 He will command you: when this
 brother knows
 I am not hated, think you then my
 friend
 Shall not be chidden from me?

George Douglas. When my life
 Is bidden from my body: not till then
 Shall I be found obedient.

Enter LADY LOCHLEVEN.

Queen. Be but wise,
 And wisdom shall not let you dis-
 obey.
 Our noble hostess, you have borne a
 son,
 I dare not say more noble, but I dare
 More simple, than his elders, — one
 whose heart
 Stands fast when fortune stands not,
 and requires,
 As other men do power and glory and
 gold,
 No guerdon but the memory writ of
 him

To have been most true when fortune
 was most false,
 And most to have loved whom she
 most hated: this
 Shall not of them be written. Come
 you not
 To bring one to me that shall never sin
 As he by faith and folly? I would say
 Of my great brother and your kingly
 son
 Nothing but good; yet can nor you
 nor I
 Say that he loves me and my fallen
 estate
 More than the power he comes to take
 from me,
 Or rather from their hands that ere he
 came
 Had rent it out of mine. Nay, look
 not sad:
 You should be merrier than my mother
 might,
 Were she now living.

Lady Lochleven. God shall witness
 me
 What joy I have of such a guest, or
 pride
 To be so stricken, madam, of your
 tongue
 Chastising me for triumph: if my heart
 Exalt itself for this day's sake, God
 knows,
 Who hears you mock me.

Queen. Nay, I said no scorn;
 I had rather need to pray you in his
 name
 Scorn not at me. Let him come in. I
 know
 What ceremony my masters should put
 on
 Were but to mock their servant.
Enter MURRAY, ATHOL, and MORTON.
 Sirs, you twain
 That brought me two months since
 between you safe
 Out of the town by night that sought
 my blood
 Myself bid welcome; but she is not I
 That in this presence should make wel-
 come here
 My father's son; nor shall my speech
 usurp
 For modesty that office: yet indeed

I am glad, my lord, to see your face,
that must
Bring comfort, or an end of all this life
That yet needs comfort.

Murray. What I may, I will:
Yet haply shall you find not in my
words

Or death or comfort; as you give them
heed,

Shall they prove comfortable or deadly.

— Sirs,

I have that to speak and hear that but
requires

The Lady Mary's ear and mine: I pray
you,

Take not offence that I crave leave to
say

We must for some space lack your
company.

Morton. My lord, the land that puts
her trust in you

Bids us obey, well knowing that love
nor fear

Shall bend you from her service.

Lady Lochleven. Sir —

Murray. Your will?

Lady Lochleven. I am ne parcel of the
sovereign state

That gives you of its greatness, nor
have right

To speak commandingly; yet ere I go
I would desire you by what name I
may,

Look on this lady with such equal eyes
As nor the wrath and hate of violent
men,

Nor sense of evil done to this land's
peace

By her mischance and evil counsellors,
Nor (what I would not fear to find in
you)

Desire of rule with pride of station,
may

Divert to do her wrong, or glance asid
From the plain roadway of that right-
eousness

Whose name is also mercy. This at
least

Surely by me may be of you required,
That in this house no wrong by word
or act,

By deed or threat, may touch her.

Murray. Be assured

No wrong shall ever touch her by my
hand,

And be content to know it.

Queen. Madam, these lords
Know that I thought ere this to find of
you

A mediatrix between me and your
son:

I have my hope, and with a humble
heart

I take your intercession thankfully.

[*Exeunt all but the QUEEN and MUR-
RAY.*]

Murray. I would I had another cause
to speak,

Or you to listen, than this bitter theme
That brings us back together, though for
that

I had died a foreign man.

Queen. I thought not, sir,
When we last parted ere the break of
spring,

To meet you thus in summer; but
these months

Have wrought things stranger on me.

Murray. Say, yourself

Have made of them more strange and
perilous use

Than is the fruit they bear. I am not
come

To flatter with you; that I seek your
death

I think you fear not, yet should surely
know

The man that seeks were now more like
to speed

Than he that would preserve it
Heaven and earth

As with the tongue of one same law
demand

Justice against you; nor can pity
breathe

But low and fearful, till the right be
weighed

That must in pity's spite and fear's be
done,

Or this land never thrive. For that
right's sake,

And not for hatred or rebellious heart,
Do men require that judgment pass on
you,

And bring forth execution: the broad
world

Expects amazedly when we that rule
 Shall purge this land of blood, which
 now looks red
 In the world's eye, and blushing not
 for shame
 Blushes with bloodshed; in men's general mouths
 The name of Scot is as a man's attaind
 Of murderous treason, or as his more vile
 That for base heart and fear, or hire of gold,
 With folded hands watches the hands
 that slay
 Grow great in murder; and God's heavy doom
 Shall be removed not from us, nor his wrath,
 Well may we fear, shall lighten, till the deed
 That reeks as recent yet toward the fair heavens
 Be thoroughly cleansed with judgment.
Queen. Must I too
 Bleed to make Scotland clean of baser blood
 Than this she seeks of mine?
Murray. If you shall die,
 Bethink you for what cause, and that sole thought
 Shall seal your lips up from all pride of plea
 That would put in between your deed and doom
 The name of queen to cover you. No age
 That lived on earth red-handed without law
 Ever let pass in peace and unchastised
 Such acts as this that yet in all men's ears
 Rings as a cry unanswered. When your lord
 Lay newly murdered, and all tongues of friends
 Were loud in prayer to you to save your name
 From stain of accusation, and yield up
 That head to judgment which the whole world held
 Blood-guilty, first with subtle stretch of time
 Did you put back the trial, then devise

To make it fruitless save of mockery;
 next,
 I cannot say for shame what shame foregone
 Moved you to put upon this loathing land
 That great dishonor to behold and bear
 The man your lover for its lord, and you,
 Queen of all Scots and thrall of one most base,
 While yet the ring was from his finger warm
 That sealed it first, and on his wedded hand
 The young blood of your husband, ere the print
 Had cooled of marriage or of murder,—you
 In the hot circle of his amorous arms
 A new-espoused adulteress. Will you say
 You were enforced or by false counsels bent
 To take him to your bosom? In what eye
 Was not the foregone commerce of your loves
 As bare as shame? what ear had heard not blown
 His name that was your sword and paramour,
 Whose hand in yours was now as steel to slay,
 Now as a jewel for love to wear, a pledge
 Hot from your lips and from your husband's heart?
 Who knew not what should make this man so proud
 That none durst speak against him of your friends
 But must abide for answer unaware
 The peril of the swords that followed him?
 Went he not with you where you went, and bade
 Men come and go, do this or do not, stand
 Or pass as pleased him, ere that day had risen
 Which gave the mockery of a ravished bride

To the false violence of his fraudful
 rape
 That hardly she could feign to fear, or
 hide
 The sweetness of the hour when she
 might yield
 That which was his before, and in men's
 eyes
 Make proof of her subjection? Nay,
 forbear;
 Plead not for shame that force was put
 on you
 To bear that burden and embrace that
 shame
 For which your heart was hungry: foe
 nor friend
 Could choose but see it, and that the
 food desired
 Must be but mortal to you. Think on
 this,—
 How you came hither crowned these
 six years gone,
 In this same summer month, and with
 what friends
 Girt round about, and guarded with
 what hopes,
 And to a land how loving; and these
 years,
 These few brief years, have blown from
 off your boughs
 All blossom of that summer, though
 nor storm
 Nor fire from heaven hath wrecked nor
 wind laid low
 That stately tree that shadowed a glad
 land,
 But now being inly gnawn of worms to
 death,
 And made a lurking-place for poisonous
 things
 To breed and fester at its rotten root,
 The axe is come against it. None save
 you
 Could have done this, to turn all hearts
 and hands,
 That were for love's sake laid before
 your feet,
 To fire and iron whetted and made
 hot
 To war against you. No man lives that
 knows
 What is your cause, and loathes not;
 though for craft

Or hope of vantage some that know
 will seem
 To know not, and some eyes be rather
 blind
 Than see what eyeless ignorance in its
 sleep,
 If but it would, must needs take note
 of: none
 Whose mind is maimed not by his own
 mere will,
 And made perforce of its own deed
 perverse,
 Can read this truth awry. What have
 you done?
 Men might weep for you, yea, behold-
 ing it,
 The eyes of angels melt: no tide of
 tears
 Could wash from hand or soul the sin-
 ful sign
 That now stands leprous there; albeit
 God knows
 Myself for very pity could be glad
 By mine own loss to ransom you, and
 set
 Upon your soul again the seal of peace,
 And in your hand its empire; but your
 act
 Has plucked out of men's hearts that
 fain would keep
 The privilege of mercy. God alone
 Can lose not that forever, but retains
 For all sins done that cry for judgment
 here
 The property of pity, which in man
 Were mere compliance and confederacy
 With the sin pardoned. So shall you
 do best,
 Being thus advised, to entertain the
 hope
 Of nothing but God's mercy, and hence-
 forth
 Seek that as chiefest refuge; for in
 man
 There shall no trust deliver you, nor
 free
 Body nor soul from bonds. Weep not
 for that;
 But let your tears be rather as were
 hers
 That wept upon the feet of God, and
 bought
 With that poor price her pardon.

Queen. So should I,
 If grief more great may buy it than
 any of theirs
 That had sinned more than I; nay,
 such have been,
 And have been pardoned. I have done
 ill, and given
 My name for shame to feed on, put
 mine honor
 Into mine enemies' keeping, made my
 fame
 A prey and pasture for the teeth of
 scorn.
 I dare not say I wist not by what mean
 I should be freed of one that marred
 my life,
 Who could by no mean else be quit of
 him
 Save this blind way of blood: yet men
 there were
 More wise than I, men much less
 wronged of him,
 That led me to it, and left me; but
 indeed
 I cite not them to extenuate by strange
 aid
 Mine own rash mind and unadvised-
 ness,
 That brought forth fruit of death; yet
 must you know
 What counsels led me by the hand,
 and whence
 My wrath was fostered; and how all
 alone,
 How utterly uncomforted, and girt
 With how great peril, when the man
 was slain,
 I stood, and found not you to counsel
 me,
 And no man else that loved; and in
 such need,
 If I did ill to seek to that strong hand
 Which had for me done evil,—if evil
 it were
 To avenge me of mine enemy,—what
 did they
 That by their hands and voices on his
 side
 Put force on me to wed him? Yet I
 say not,
 I was indeed enforced: I will not mock
 With one false plea my penitent heart,
 nor strive

With words to darken counsel, nor
 incense
 By foolishness your wisdom, to provoke
 A judgment heavier than I wait for
 nay,
 You have not said that bitter thing of
 me
 That I may dare unsay; what most I
 would,
 I must deny not: yet I pray you think,
 Even as might God, being just, what
 cause I had,
 What plea to lighten my sore load of
 sin,—
 Mismatched and miscounselled, and had
 seen
 Of my sad life not wholly nineteen
 years
 When I came hither crowned; as yet
 would God
 Your head, my brother, had endured
 for mine
 That heaviness of honor, and this
 hand
 The weight of Scotland, that being laid
 in mine
 Has fallen and left it maimed, and on
 my brows
 A mark as his whose temples for his
 crime
 Were ringed with molten iron! Take
 them now,
 Though but for pity of me that pray
 you take,
 And bear them better than I did; for
 me,
 Though no plea serve me in the sight
 of man,
 Nor grace excuse my fault, I am yet
 content,
 If I may live but so much time in
 bonds
 As may suffice for God to pardon me,
 Who shall not long put off to pardon,
 then
 Shut eyes and sleep to death.
Murray. I had thought to-night
 To speak no more with you, but let that
 hope
 Which only in God's name I gave you
 bear
 What fruit it might with prayer and
 watching: yet

Take comfort, and assure yourself of
life,

And, if it may be, honor; one of these
I may take on me to redeem, and one
So as I may will I preserve from death
Dealt of men's tongues that murder it.

But you,
Keep these things in your heart: that
if you raise

Within this realm a faction, or devise
To break these bonds, I shall not keep
an hour

This power I have to save you; nor
shall keep

If France or England be by word of
yours

Stirred up to strike at our frail peace;
nor yet

If you shall cleave to him that should
for shame

As from this land be cast out from your
heart:

But if toward God your faults be faith-
fully

In good men's sight acknowledged, and
that life

You led with your false lord, and all
sins past,

Loathed and lamented, and in days to
be

The living purpose in you manifest
Of a more modest habit, and a life
More nobly fashioned; if the slaughter
done

On your dead husband seem of you
abhorred,

And those ill days misliked wherein
your fame

Drank mortal poison from his murder-
er's hand, —

If this be seen, and that your mind
lives clear

From counsel of revenge upon those
lords

Who sought your reformation, nor
with hope

Nor dangerous forethought of device to
be

Renews itself to do them some day
wrong, —

Then may you now sit safe, and un-
reproved

Expect an end of bondage; for at large

You cannot think to live yet, who in
time

May haply by repentance be restored,
And, for your prison somewhere here
endured,

Find yet your throne again, and sit
renewed

More royal than men wist who saw the
ship

Put in from France that bore you.

Queen. O my friend,
O brother, found now father to me too.
Who have raised and rebegotten me
from death,

By how much less I thank you for my
life,

Think so much more for honor I give
thanks

That you raise up the hope in me to
have

Which was nigh dead for shame. Oh!
let me hold

[Embracing him.]

My comfort in mine arms, and with
dumb lips

Kiss you my thanks: I looked for less
than this,

But yet for comfort of you. One thing
more,

Having so much, will I require, and
cease, —

Even for my son's sake and mine own
to lay

The charge upon you of this regency
Which none might bear so noble, nor
bring back

Her peace again to Scotland, as I know
Your hand shall bring; and, had I
known betimes,

I had not started from its curb aside,
Nor set against its strength, in no good
hour,

The feebleness of mine. But if your
heart

Be large enough to let forgiveness in
Of my wrongs done, and days of wan-
ton will,

Take this charge too, — to keep for me
the forts

Of all that was my kingdom: I would
have

Nothing of mine lie now not in your
hand.

Keep too my jewels; all I had of worth,
 What help without you should I have of it,
 What profit or what surety? Let your heart
 Cast her not out who prays you of your grace,
 Take these in trust and me.

Murray. I may not these;
 But you, that put yourself into my trust,
 I will not fail.

Queen. Nay, you shall keep them too.

Murray. I would not put my hand forth uncompelled
 To take for life and death the burden up

That burns as fire, and bows the back that bears

As with an iron load; and certainly
 He that shall take this kingdom on his hand,

I think, shall live not long: nor pride nor hope,

But very love and strong necessity,
 Could only bow me down to obey their will

Who should enforce on mine the task to bear

This grievous office, that if Scotland bid
 I for her sake must bear till I may die.
 But if I be not bidden, for no love
 Or fear, or lust of kingdom, will I seek
 The labor and the grief of that great charge

That I may live and feel not.

Queen. By my lips,
 That have no royal right to speak for her

Now, think that yet she bids you, seeing none else

To undo mine evil done on her, and heal

The wounds mine enemies and myself have made

In her sweet peace; she hath no stay but you:

Whom other should she seek to? And for me

Again I dare not urge you, but my heart

Is turned into a prayer that pleads with yours

To lend its weakness comfort of your strength

By taking off its fears; these that break mine

Can bow not yours: oh! take from me that weight

Which were to you but sport and ornament, —

The natural honor of a hand so strong
 And spirit elect of all men's souls alive
 To do a work imperial.

Murray. If not else
 But by me only may this land find peace,

By me, then, shall it. For your private charge,

Impute not to me for default of love
 That I beseech you lay no more on me

Than public need enforces: in my trust
 Your treasures were no safer than they stand

Now that I keep them not, and no man's tongue

Can tax me with them as detained from you

By fraud or usurpation; which mine ear
 Were loth to know was muttered.

Queen. But you see
 Nor they nor I have surety save in you:
 Let it be seen of them that else may doubt,

How thankfully I trust you; even for that

Do thus, to do me good in men's report
 When they shall see us at one: from mine own hand,

Except you take them, shall they not be rent

By craft or force of hidden or harrying hands

That could not wrest from yours what mine must yield

For fault of you to help me?

Murray. As you will.

I would not cross you where I might content:

Yet willingly I cannot take on me
 More charge than needs of privy trusts to keep

That bring men's blame about them but in this

My will shall be your servant.

Re-enter LADY LOCHLEVEN and
GEORGE DOUGLAS.

For this time
I take farewell: be patient, and seek
peace
Whence God may send it.—To your
gentler hand,
While yet the Lady Mary lives in ward,
Behooves not me commend her, being
but bound
As reverently as may beseem your son
In the state's name to charge you that
she find
At all men's hands that guard her now
about
Good usage with safe keeping; which
to assure
Shall hardly need this young man's
service here,
For whom the state has other use, and
I

A worthier work than still to keep such
watch
As porters use or pages.

Lady Lochleven. He and I
Stand at your bidding; yet were nowise
loth

The state that gave should take this
charge away
It laid upon us.

Queen. Sir, the grace you brought
And comfort, to me sorrowing and
afraid,

Go ever with you; and farewell.

Murray. Farewell.

[*Exeunt* LADY LOCHLEVEN and MUR-
RAY.

Queen. Will you not go?

George Douglas. Whither you bid,
and when, I will go swiftly.

Queen. With your lord and mine,
I would have said: yet irks it me to
say

My lord, who had none under heaven,
and was

Of these my lords once lady. Said I
not

You should do well to cast off care of
me,

Whom you must leave indeed now at
command

More powerful of more potent lips
than mine?

I would not have you set your younget
will

Against his word imperial; nor, I think,
Doth he fear that, who bids us come
and go,

And whose great pleasure is that you
part hence,

And I sit here. Be patient, and seek
peace,

You heard him bid me: patience we
must have

If we would rest obedient; and for
peace,

So haply shall we find it, having
learnt

What rest is in submission.

George Douglas. Bid me stay,
And that my will shall part not hence
alive

What need I swear?

Queen. Alas! your will may stay,
Your will may wait on me to do me
good,

Your loves and wishes serve me, wher
yourself

Shall live far off. Our lord forbids
them not:

It is the service of your present hand,
The comfort of your face, help of your
heart,

That he forbids me.

George Douglas. And, though God
forbade,

Save by my death he should compel
me not

To do this bidding: only by your
mouth,

Of all that rule in heaven and earth,
will I

Be willingly commanded.

Queen. You must go.

Nay, I knew that: how should one stay
by me?

There was not left me, by God's wrath
or man's,

One friend when I came hither, in the
world.

And from the waste and wilderness of
grief

If one grain ripen,—from the stone and
sand

If one seed blossom,—if my misery
find

One spring on earth to assuage its fiery
lip, —

How should I hope that God or man
will spare

To trample or to quench it?

George Douglas. I am here
While you shall bid me live, and only
hence

When you shall bid me but depart and
die.

Queen. There was a time when I
would dream that men
There were to do my bidding, — such
as loved
And were beloved again, and knew not
fear

Nor hope but of love's giving; but
meseemed

That in my dream all these were cast
away,

And by God's judgment, or through
wrath of men,

Or mine own fault, or change and chance
of time,

I lived too long to look for love in
vain.

Many there are that hate me now of
men:

Doth one live yet that loves?

George Douglas. If one there were
That for your love's sake should abhor
his life,

Hating all hope save this, to die for
you, —

What should he do to die so?

Queen. If I bade
That for my love's sake he should love
his life,

And use its strength to cherish me,
who knows

If he would heed? or say I gave com-
mand

To do some ill thing or of ill report, —
Were it to slay our brother now gone
hence, —

Would one do that? I would not have
it done,

Though I should bid him. Do not
answer me

As though I questioned with you seri-
ously,

Or spake of things that might be
thought upon,

Who do but jest with grief as with my
friend,

That plays again familiarly with me,
And from the wanderings of a joyless
wit

Turn to clasp hands with sorrow. You
must go.

George Douglas. Ay, when you bid;
but were my going from you

Part of your grief, which is more grief
to me

Than my soul's going from forth my
body were,

I would not set my face from hence
alive.

Queen. I hold it not for no part of
my grief

To bid you from me: yet being here
bound in

As I with walls and waters, we should
find

Less help than yet I hope for of your
hand

Being hence enlarged. We will take
counsel, sir,

And choose, with no large choice to
make of friends, —

To whom we shall appoint you, — by
what mean

To deal for our deliverance: as, with
one

Once of my household, and this lady's
kin,

Who here of all my Maries the last
left

Partakes my bonds; the Laird of
Ricarton,

My husband's kinsman; and what readi-
est friends

Once more may be raised up, as when
I fled

From shame and peril, and a prison-
house

As hateful as these bonds, to find on
earth —

Ah! no such love and faith as yours in
man.

SCENE V. — HOLYROOD.

MURRAY and MORTON.

Murray. I am vexed with divers
counsels, and my will

Sees nor its way nor end. This act
 proclaimed
 That seals the charge of murder on the
 queen
 To justify our dealing had to it hands
 That here first met: Kirkaldy with
 Glencairn,
 Balfour with Maitland, Huntley with
 Argyle,
 True man with traitor,—all were as
 one mind,
 One tongue to tax her with complicity,
 Found art and part with them that
 slew her lord.
 Men praised the council for this judg-
 ment given
 As from a single and a resolute soul;
 Scarce one withstood save Herries,
 and his voice
 Was as a wind that sings in travellers'
 ears
 Unheeded; then the doom that gives
 to death
 All that in act maintain the former
 faith,
 And writes for Catholic traitor, should
 have purged
 The state of treacherous or of danger-
 ous friends
 Such as made protest then against this
 law,
 And fled from our part to the Hamil-
 tons,—
 Caithness and Athol, with the bishop
 called
 Of Murray, whom the Assembly met
 to judge
 By one same doom has with Argyle
 condemned
 To stand in sackcloth for adulteries
 past
 At Stirling through the time of service
 held
 Within the chapel royal. Such men's
 stay
 It irks not me to lose, who by their loss
 Were fain to win their enemies for my
 friends
 More fast and faithful; but men's sun-
 dering minds
 Nor council nor assembly can reknit,
 Though Knox there sit by Maitland,
 and Balfour

Touch sides with Craig; and while the
 state as now
 Lives many-minded and distraught of
 will,
 How shall its hope be stable?
Morton. Some there are
 Have all their will, or more than we
 that rule
 By secular wit and might: the preachers
 reign
 With heavier hand than ours upon the
 state,
 Who in this late assembly by their
 doom
 Bade your fair sister of Argyle partake
 The sackcloth penance of her slippery
 lord
 For scandal to the Kirk done when last
 year
 At the font's edge her arms sustained
 our prince
 For baptism of such hands as served
 the mass:
 If it have leave long to sit lawgiver,
 Their purity will pinch us.
Murray. Have no fear:
 It shall not Douglas; and we lack
 their help
 Who sway the commons only with
 their breath,
 Now most of all when our high coun-
 sels fail,
 And hopes are turned as 'twere to
 running streams
 That flow from ours to feed our ene-
 mies' hands
 With washings of our wreck, waifs of
 our strength,
 That melts as water from us. Those
 chief twain
 Whose league I sought by marriage,
 and had hope
 To bind them to us as brethren, when
 Argyle
 With me should knit himself anew, to
 wed
 His brother to the sister of my wife
 With happier hope than he espoused
 mine own,
 While Huntley's son should lead my
 daughter home,
 And with this fourfold knot our loves
 be tied,

And fortunes with each other's growth
 ingrafted, —
 Both these look back now toward the
 Hamiltons
 To mingle factions with them, being
 assured
 Our hands now lack the secret sword
 we had
 To draw at need against them, since
 their names
 Set at Craigmillar to the bond of blood
 Are with that bond consumed, and no
 tongue left
 To wag in witness of their part of guilt,
 Now Bothwell's knaves are hanged
 that laid the train,
 And Hay with them, and one most
 near his trust, —
 His kinsman Hepburn, from whose
 mouth condemned,
 And Ormiston's, we have confession
 wrung
 That marks with blood as parcel of
 their deed
 More than Balfour that in the assem-
 bly sit,
 And must partake his surety. This, my
 lord,
 Craves of us care and counsel, that our
 names
 Be writ not fool or coward, who took
 in hand
 Such trust to work such treason.
Morton. Nay, no Scot
 Shall say we fell from faith or treach-
 erously
 Let men's hopes fade that trusted us,
 and sank
 Through feebleness of ours: yet have
 we strength
 To lower the height of heart and confi-
 dence
 That makes their faction swell, who
 were but late
 Too faint of spirit, too fearful and un-
 sure,
 To be made firm with English subsi-
 dies.
 Three thousand marks, that Scrope by
 secret hand
 Sent from Carlisle to Herries, could
 not serve
 To give or shape or sinew to their plots

Who are now so great their houses'
 heir must wed
 No lowlier than a queen, and Both-
 well's wife,
 For this divorced or widowed.
Murray. Ay; we know
 The archbishop his good uncle with
 this youth
 Hath in Dumbarton fortified himself;
 And while they there sit strong and
 high in hope
 Our prisoner and our penitent late, we
 hear,
 Grows blithe of mood and wanton;
 from her sight
 Have I dismissed my mother's youngest
 born,
 Lest in her flatteries his weak faith be
 snared
 And strangled with a smile; and for
 her hand
 I have found a fitter suitor than
 Arbroath
 When she shall wed again, within
 whose veins
 Some drops of blood run royal as her
 own;
 Methuen, whose grandsire was the
 third that set
 His ring on that Queen Margaret's
 wedded hand
 From the seventh Henry sent ambassa-
 dress
 To our fourth James, to bring for
 bridal gift
 Her father's love and England's to her
 lord,
 And with the kiss of marriage on his
 lips
 To seal that peace which with her hus-
 band's life
 Found end at Flodden from her
 brother's hand
 That split the heart of Scotland. So
 the queen,
 If she wed Methuen, shall espouse a
 man
 Whose father of the same queen's
 womb was born
 That bore her father; and whose blood
 as hers
 Is lineal from the seed of English
 kings,

Through one same mother's sons, queen
 once of Scots,
 And daughter born and sister, though
 unqueened,
 Of those twain Henries that made
 peace and war
 With Scotland and her lord; and by
 this match
 The Hamiltons being frustrate of their
 hope
 Could yet not tax us with a meaner
 choice
 Than they would make for her, who
 while she lives
 Must stand thenceforth far off from
 their designs
 And disallied from all that in her name
 Draw now to head against us; and
 some help
 We need the more to cross them now,
 that France,
 To whom I thought to seek as to my
 friend
 And thence find aid in this necessity
 That else finds none, since England's
 jealous craft
 Puts in our enemies' hands gold for a
 sword
 More sharp than steel — France, that
 would send at need
 The choice of all her sons that hold our
 faith
 To live and die beside us here in arms,
 Grows chillier toward us than the chan-
 ging wind
 That brings back winter; for the brood
 of Guise,
 Our prisoner's friends and kinsmen of
 Lorraine,
 Prevail again on Catherine's adverse
 part,
 Whose hate awhile gives way to them,
 and yields
 Our cause into their hands that were
 more like
 To help this daughter of their danger-
 ous house
 Take up the crown resigned, and through
 their strength
 Renew this kingdom's ruin with her
 reign,
 Than send us aid and arms to guard its
 peace

From inroad as from treason: which I
 doubt
 We shall hear news of from my
 brother's tongue,
Enter SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS.
 Who comes without a herald.
Sir W. Douglas. Sir, the news
 Is dashed with good and evil equally,
 That here I bring you; for the treasons
 laid
 Have missed their mark, and left un-
 wounded yet
 My house's honor, that retains in trust
 So great a charge. You had word ere
 this of me,
 By what strange fortune was their plot
 made known,
 Who thought to fall upon us unaware,
 And find a ferry for some seventy
 swords
 To cross the lake in mine own barge
 surprised,
 And smite those thirty guards that hold
 the walls,
 And make a murderous passage for the
 queen
 To come forth free with feet that
 walked in blood;
 And how by one, a Frenchman of her
 train,
 Who, being not in their counsel, heard
 some speech
 Of such a preparation, and conceived
 This was a plot to take her from your
 hand,
 Laid by the fiercer faction of the Kirk
 That sought to snare and slay her in
 your despite,
 To me was all discovered; and be-
 times
 I gave command no barge thenceforth
 should pass
 Between the main shore and mine island
 walls,
 But a skiff only that with single oars
 Might be rowed over. Baffled thus,
 here friends
 Were fain to buy the boatman's faith
 with gold,
 Whom on suspicion I dismissed, but
 since,
 Finding less trust and service in the
 knave

<p>That had his place, called back, and bade take heed Of these that would have won to their device A foundling page within my castle bred, And called by mine own name; who by this plot Should have seduced for them my sen- tinals, And oped the gate by night: but yet I find, For all toils set and gins to take their faith, In him and them no treason; yet so near Was treason to us, that not long since the queen Had well-nigh slipped beyond our guard by day, In habit of a laundress that was hired So to shift raiment with her; but being forth Betimes, as was this woman's use to come, In the low light by dawn, at such an hour As she was wont to sleep the morning out,— The fardel in her hand of clothes brought forth, And on her face the muffler,—it befell That as she sat before the rowers, and saw Some half her free brief way of water past, By turn of head or lightning of her look For mirth she could not hide, and joy- ous heart, Or but by some sweet note of majesty, Some new bright bearing and imperious change From her false likeness, so she drew their eyes That one who rowed, saying merrily, <i>Let us see</i> <i>What manner of dame is this,</i> would fain pluck down Her muffler, who to guard it suddenly Put up her fair white hands, which see- ing they knew, And marvelled at her purpose; she thereat,</p>	<p>A little wroth but more in laughter bared Her head, and bade stretch oars and take the land On their lives' peril; which regarding not, They straight put back as men amazed, but swore To keep fast locked from mine of all men's eyes The secret knowledge of this frustrate craft, So set her down on the island side again, With muffled head and hidden hands to wring And weep apart for passion, where my watch Looks now more strict upon her; but I think,— For all her wrath and grief to be by chance From her near hope cast down and height of mind Wherein she went forth laughingly to find What good might God bring of her perilous hour,— She hath lost not yet nor changed that heart nor hope, But looks one day to mock us. <i>Murray.</i> So I think; And in that fear would have you keep fast watch By night and day till we take off the charge Laid on your faith, and or enfranchise her Or change her place of ward; which, ere the spring That holds in chase this winter's flying foot Be turned to summer, haply shall be done. What fashion holds our mother with the queen? <i>Sir W. Douglas.</i> As she was ever tender of her state, And mild in her own office, so she keeps Observance yet and reverence more than meet Save toward a queen, toward this her guest enforced,</p>
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Who smiles her back a prisoner's
thanks, and sighs
That should smile in prison; but 'twixt
whiles
Some change of mood will turn to
scorn or spleen
Her practised patience, and some word
take wing
Forth from her heart's root through her
lips that hath
The gall of asps within it; yet not
this
Turns the heart hard or bitter that
awaits
Her gentler change, pitying the wrong
it bears,
And her that wrongs it for the sorrow's
sake
That chafes and rends her.

Murray. Pity may she give,
And be praised for it; but to enter-
tain
Hope or desire that wars against her
trust
Should turn that praise to poison.
Have you seen
Since George went thence, or noted ere
he went,
In her no token of a mingled mind
That sways 'twixt faith and such a faith-
less hope
As feeds a mother's love with deadly
dreams
Of prophesying ambition? for in him
I spied the sickness of a tainted heart
And fever-fired from the most mortal
eyes
That ever love drank death of.

Sir W. Douglas. No, my lord.

Murray. I would fain trust her mind
were whole in this,
And her thoughts firm; yet would not
trust too far,
Who know what force of fraud and fire
of will
In that fierce heart and subtle, without
fear,
That God hath given so sweet a hiding-
place,
Make how much more the peril and the
power
Of birth and kinglier beauty, that lay
wait

For her son's sake to tempt her. We
will hold
More speech of this: here shall you
rest to-night. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.

The QUEEN and MARY BEATON.

Queen. Is it not sunset? what should
ail the day
To hang so long in heaven? the world
was blind
By this time yesternight. The lake
gleams yet.
Will the sun never sink, for all the
weight
That makes this hour so heavy?
Mary Beaton. While you speak,
The outer gate that stands till nightfall
wide
Shuts on the sundown; and they bring
the keys
That soon the page shall put into our
hand
To let in freedom.

Queen. I could weep and laugh
For fear and hope and angry joy and
doubt
That wring my heart. I am sick at
once and well.
Shall I win past them in this handmaid's
dress
If we be spied? My hood is over
broad;
Help me to set it forward: and your
own
Sits loose; but pluck it closer on your
face
For cloak and cover from the keen
moon's eye
That peers against us. Twice, thou
knowest, yea thrice,
God has betrayed me to mine enemies'
hands
Even when my foot was forth: if it slip
now,
He loves nor kings that hold his office
here
Nor his own servants, but those faith-
less mouths
That mock all sovereignties in earth or
heaven.
If here he fail me, and I fall again

To sit in bonds a year — by God's own truth,

I swear I will not keep this wall of flesh

To cage my spirit within these walls of stone,

But break this down to set that free from these,

That, being delivered of men's wrongs and his,

It may stand up, and gazing in his eyes Accuse him of my traitors.

Mary Beaton. Keep good heart. Your hope before was feverish and too light,

And so it failed you: in this after-plot There is more form and likeness than in those

That left you weeping. Let not passion now

Foil your good fortune twice, or heat of mood

From keen occasion take the present edge,

And blunt the point of fortune.

Queen. If I knew This man were faithful — oh, my heart that was

Is melted from me, and the heart I have Is like wax melting. Were my feet once free,

It should be strong again: here it sinks down

As a dead fire in ashes. Dare we think I shall find faith in him, who have not found

In all the world? no man of mine there is,

None of my land or blood, but hath betrayed,

Betrayed or left me.

Mary Beaton. Nay, too strange it were

That you should come to want men's faith, and look

For love of man in vain. These were your jewels,

You cannot live to lack them: nay, but less, —

Your common ornaments to wear and leave,

Your change of raiment to cast off, and bind

A fresher robe about you: while men live,

And you live also, these must give you love,

And you must use it.

Queen. So one told me once, —

That I must use and lose it. If my time

Be come to need man's love, and find it not,

I have known death make a prophet of a man

That living could foretell but his own end,

Not save himself, being foolish; and I too,

I am mad as he was, now to think on him

Or my dead follies. Were these walls away,

I should no more; ay, when this strait is past,

I shall win back my wits and my blithe heart,

And make good cheer again.

Enter PAGE.

Page. Here are the keys.

I had wrought instead a ladder for our need,

With two strong oars made fast across, for fear

I had failed at last from under my lord's eye

To sweep them off the board-head here they ring,

As joy-bells here to give your highness note

The skiff lies moored on the island's lee, and waits

But till the castle boats by secret hands

Be stripped of oars and rowlocks, and pursuit

Made helpless, maimed of all its means; the crew

Is ready that shall lend us swifter wing Than one man's strength to fly with;

and beyond Your highness' friends upon the further bank

Wait with my master's horses. Never was

A fairer plot or likelier.

Queen. How thy face
 Lightens! Poor child, what knowest
 thou of the chance
 That cast thee on my fortunes? it may
 be
 To death ere life break bud, and thy
 poor flower
 The wind of my life's tempest shall cut
 off,
 And blow thy green branch bare. Many
 there be
 Have died, and many that now live
 shall die,
 Ere my life end, for my life's sake; and
 none
 There is that knows, of all that love or
 hate,
 What end shall come of this night's
 work, and what
 Of all my life-days. I shall die in
 bonds,
 Perchance, a bitter death; yet worse it
 were
 To outlive dead years in prison, and to
 loathe
 The life I could not lose. This will
 not be:
 No days and nights shall I see wax and
 wane,
 Kindled and quenched in bondage, any
 more:
 For if to-night I stand not free on earth
 As the sun stands in heaven, whose
 sovereign eye
 Next day shall see me sovereign, I
 shall live
 Not one day more of darkling life, as
 fire
 Pent in a grate, bound in with blacken-
 ing bars,
 But like a star by God hurled forth of
 heaven
 Fall, and men's eyes be darkened, and
 the world
 Stand heart-struck, and the night and
 day be changed
 That see me falling. If I win not forth,
 But, flying, be taken of the hands that
 were
 Before laid on me, they shall never
 think
 To hold me more in fetters, but take
 heart

To do what earth saw never yet, and
 lay
 By doom and sentence on their sover-
 eign born
 Death; I shall find swift judgment,
 and short shrift
 My justicers shall give me: so at least
 Shall I be quit of bondage. Come, my
 friends,
 That must divide with me for death or
 life
 This one night's issue; be it or worst
 or best,
 Yet have ye no worse fortune than a
 queen,
 Or she than ye no better. On this hour
 Hang all those hours that yet we have
 to live:
 Let us go forth to pluck the fruit of
 this
 That leans now toward our hand. My
 heart is light:
 Be yours not heavier; for your eyes
 and mine
 Shall look upon these walls and waves
 no more. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VII.—THE SHORE OF LOCH
 LEVEN.

GEORGE DOUGLAS, BEATON, RICAR-
 TON, *with Attendants.*

George Douglas. I hear the beat of
 the oars: they make no haste.

How the stars thicken! if a mist would
 take

The heaven but for an hour, and hide
 them round—

Ricarton. How should they steer then
 straight? We lacked but light.

And these are happy stars that sign
 this hour

With earnest of good fortune; and
 betimes

See by their favor where the prize we
 seek

Is come to port.

*Enter the QUEEN, MARY BEATON,
 Page, and a girl attending.*

Queen. Even such a night it was
 I looked again for to deliver me,
 Remembering such a night that broke
 my bonds

Two wild years past that brought me
 through to this;
 The wind is loud beneath the mount-
 ing moon,
 And the stars merry. Noble friends,
 to horse;
 When I shall feel my steed exult with
 me,
 I will give thanks for each of your good
 deeds
 To each man's several love. I know
 not yet
 That I stand here enfranchised; for
 pure joy
 I have not laid it yet to heart: me-
 thinks
 This is a lightning in my dreams to-
 night,
 That strikes and is not, and my flat-
 tered eyes
 Must wake with dawn in bonds. —
 Douglas, I pray,
 If it be not but as a flash in sleep,
 And no true light now breaking, tell
 me you,
 That were my prison's friend: I will
 believe
 I am free as fire, free as the wind, the
 night,
 All glad fleet things of the airier ele-
 ment
 That take no hold on earth; for even
 like these
 Seems now the fire in me that was my
 heart,
 And is a song, a flame, a burning
 cloud
 That moves before the sun at dawn,
 and fades
 With fierce delight to drink his breath
 and die.
 If ever hearts were stabbed with joy to
 death,
 This that cleaves mine should do it,
 and one sharp stroke
 Pierce through the thrilled and trem-
 bling core like steel,
 And cut the roots of life. Nay, I am
 crazed,
 To stand and babble like one mad
 with wine,
 Stung to the heart and bitten to the
 brain

With this great drink of freedom; oh!
 such wine
 As fills man full of heaven, and in his
 veins
 Becomes the blood of gods. I would
 fain feel
 That I were free a little, ere that sense
 Be put to use: those walls are fallen
 for me,
 Those waters dry, those gaolers dead,
 and this
 The first night of my second reign, that
 here
 Begins its record. I will talk no more,
 Nor waste my heart in joyous words,
 nor laugh
 To set my free face toward the large-
 eyed sky,
 Against the clear wind and the climb-
 ing moon,
 And take into mine eyes and to my
 breast
 The whole sweet night and all the stars
 of heaven,
 But put to present work the heart and
 hand
 That here rise up a queen's. Bring me
 to horse:
 We will take counsel first of speed.
 and then
 Take time for counsel.
Beaton. Madam, here at hand
 The horses wait: Lord Seyton rides
 with us
 Hence to Queen's Ferry, where beyond
 the Forth
 We reach Claude Hamilton, who with
 fresh steeds
 Expects us; to Long Niddry thence,
 and there
 Draw rein among the Seytons, ere
 again
 We make for Hamilton, whose walls
 should see
 The sun and us together.
Queen. Well devised.
 Where is the girl that fled with us, and
 gave
 These garments for my surety? She
 shall have
 Her part in my good hour, that in mine
 ill
 Did me good service.

Ricarton. Madam, she must stay:
We have not steeds enough, and those
we have
May bear no load more than perforce
they must,

Or we not hope to speed.

Queen. Nay, she shall go,
Not bide in peril of mine enemies
here

While we fly scathless hence.

Girl. Most gracious queen,
Of me take no such care: I am well
content
They should do with me all they would,
and I

Live but so long to know my queen as
safe

As I for her die gladly.

Ricarton. She says well:
Get we to horse. I must ride south to
rouse
My kinsfolk, and with all our Hepburn
bands

Seize on Dunbar; whence northward I
may bear
Good tidings to your lord.

Queen. God make them good
That he shall hear of me, and from his
mouth

Send me good words and comfort! You
shall ride

Straight from Lord Seyton's with my
message borne

To all good soldiers of your clan and
mine,

And wake them for our common lord's
dear love

To strike once more, or never while
they live

Be called but slaves and kinless: then
to him

For whom the bonds that I put off to-
night

Were borne and broken. — Douglas, of
that name

Most tender and most true to her that
was

Of women most unfriended, and of
queens

Most abject and unlike to recom-
pense,

Take in your hand the hand that it set
free,

And lead me as you led me forth of
bonds

To my more perfect freedom. — Sirs, to
horse. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VIII. — HAMILTON CASTLE.

The QUEEN, ARGYLE, and HUNTLEY.

Queen. I ever thought to find your
faiths again

When time had set me free; nor shall
my love

To my good friends be more unprofit-
able

Than was my brother's, from whose
promised hand

Both have withdrawn the alliance of
your own

To plight once more with mine: your
son, my lord,

And, noble sir, your brother, will not
fail

Of worthier wedlock and of trustier
ties

Than should have bound them to a
traitor's blood,

His daughter, and the sister of his wife,
Whom he so thought to honor, and in
them

Advance his counsels and confirm his
cause,

Through your great names allied, who
now take part

More worthily with one long over-
thrown,

And late re-risen with many a true man's
more

And royally girt round with many a
friend's;

Nor need we lay upon our kinsmen
here

All our hope's burden, nor submit our
hand

To marriage with our cousin's of
Arbroath

For fault of other stay. For mine own
mind,

I would stand rather on Dumbarton
rock

Walled in with Fleming's spears, than
here sit fast

With these six thousand ranged about
the walls

That five days' suns have brought to
 strengthen me
 Since I fled hither in these poor same
 weeds
 That yet for need I wear. Now, by the
 joy
 I had that night to feel my horse be-
 neath
 Bound like my heart that through those
 darkling ways
 Shot sunwards to the throne, I do not
 think
 Thus to sit long at wait, who have the
 hands
 Subscribed here of so many loyal lords
 To take no thought but of their faith to
 me,
 Nor let dissension touch their hearts
 again
 Till I sit crowned as arbitress of all
 When the great cause is gained. Each
 bloodless day
 Makes our foes greater: from Dunbar
 Lord Hume,
 Who thence with hand too swift cut off
 our friends,
 Brings now six hundred to my brother's
 flag,
 Who hangs hard by us; and from Ed-
 inburgh
 Grange leads his hundreds; all the
 Glasgow folk,
 For love of Lennox, with the Lothian
 carles,
 Draw round their regent hither; and
 God knows
 These are no cowards nor men vile
 esteemed
 That stand about him: better is he
 served
 Of them than we of Herries, whose false
 wit
 Works with an open face and a close
 heart
 For other ends than live upon his
 tongue,
 And fill with protestation those loud
 lips
 That plead and swear on both sides;
 he would stand
 My counsellor, yet has not craft enough
 To draw those enemies hence that watch
 us here

By tumult raised along the border side
 For none to quell but Murray, who was
 bound
 From Glasgow where he lies yet to
 Dumfries,
 But halts to gather head, and fall on us
 When we set forth; which by my pri-
 vate will
 I would not yet, but that my kinsmen
 yearn
 To bid him battle; and with victory won
 Seize to themselves the kingdom by my
 hand,
 Which they should wield then at their
 will, and wed
 To their next heir's: so should ye have
 their seed
 For kings of Scotland, who were
 leagued ere this
 With our main foes, and to their hands
 but late
 By composition and confederacy
 Would have given up my life to buy
 their ends
 Even with the blood whose kinship in
 their veins
 They thought should make them royal.
Argyle. We must fear
 These days that fleet, and bring us no
 more strength,
 Bring to the regent comfort and good
 hope
 From England of a quiet hand main-
 tained
 Upon the borders, and such present
 peace
 As fights against us there upon his side,
 While he stands fast and gathers friends,
 who had
 But common guard about him when
 your grace
 Flew hither first, yet would not at the
 news
 For dread of our near neighborhood
 turn back
 With that thin guard to Stirling; and
 by this
 The chiefs of all his part are drawn to
 him,
 Morton and Mar, Semple with Ochil
 tree,
 And they that wrung forth of your royal
 hand

The writing that subscribed it kingdom-
less :

All these are armed beneath him.

Queen. These are strong,
Yet are our friends not weaker : twain
alone,

You twain with whom I speak, being
on my side,

I would not fear to bide the feud of
these ;

And here are Cassilis, Eglinton, Mont-
rose,

Ross, Crawford, Errol, Fleming, Suther-
land,

Herries with Maxwell, Boyd and Oli-
phant,

And Livingstone, and Beaumont that
was sent

To speak for France as with mine
uncle's tongue

Pleading with those my traitors for that
life

Which here he finds enfranchised ; and
all these

As one true heart to me and faithful
hand,

In God's name and their honor's
leagued as friends

Who till mine enemies be cast down
will know

Naught save their duty to me, that no
strife

Shall rend in sunder, and no privy jar
Rive one from other that stands fast by
me.

This have they sworn ; and, by my trust
in them,

I will not doubt with favor or with force
To quell the hardiest heart set opposite.

Have I not sent forth word of amnesty
To every soul in Scotland free save
these,

The top and crown of traitors, Morton
first ;

And Lindsay, from whose hand I took
a pledge

To be redeemed with forfeit of his head ;
Semple, that writ lewd ballads of my
love,

And that good provost whom I swore
to give,

For one night's prison given me in his
house,

A surer gaol for narrower resting-place
Than that wherein I rested not ; and
last

Balfour, that gave my lord's trust up
and mine ?

Upon these five heads fallen will I set
foot

When I tread back the stair that
mounts my throne.

All others shall find grace : yea, though
their hearts

Were set more stark against me and
their hands

More dangerous aimed than these ; for
this God knows

My heart more honours and shall ever
love

A hardy foe more than a coward friend ;
And Hume and Grange, mine enemies
well approved,

Could love or recompense reknit their
faiths

To my forsworn allegiance, in mine
eyes

Should stand more clear than un-
revolted men

Whose trustless faith is farther from
my trust

Than from my veins the nearness of
their blood.

I am not bitter-hearted, nor take pride
To keep the record of wrongs done to
me

For privy hate to gnaw upon, and fret
Till all its wrath be wroken ; I desire

Not blood so much of them that seek
mine own

As victory on them, who being but
subdued

For me may live or die my subjects :
this

I care not if I win with liberal words
Or weapons of my friends, for love or
fear,

Or by their own dissensions that may
spring

And blossom to my profit ; and I hold
Nor fear nor grief grievous nor terri-
ble

That might buy victory to me, for
whose sake

Peril and pain seem pleasant, and all
else

That men thirst after as I thirst for
this —

Wealth, honour, pleasure, all things
weighed therewith —

Seem to my soul contemptible and vile.
Nor would I reign that I might take

revenge,
But rather be revenged that I might
reign.

For to live conquered and put on defeat,
To sit with humbled head and bear
base life,

Endure the hours to mock me, and the
days

To take and give me as a bonds slave up
For night by night to tread on — while
death lives,

And may be found, or man lay hold on
him,

I will not have this to my life, but die.
I know not what is life that outlives
hope,

But I will never: when my power were
past,

My kingdom gone, my trust brought
down, my will

Frustrate, I would not live one heart-
less hour

To think what death were gentlest;
none so sharp

But should be softer to my bosom
found

Than that which felt it strike.

Huntley. You speak as ever

Your own high soul and speech; no
spirit on earth

Was ever seen more kinglike than lifts
up

With yours our hearts to serve you for
its sake

As these have served that here would
speak with you.

Enter BEATON and MARY BEATON.

To whom our loves yield place.

[*Exeunt ARGYLE and HUNTLEY.*

Queen. My chance were ill

If to no better love your loves gave
way

Than that which makes us friends. —
You are come betimes,

If you come ready now to ride; here lie
The letters you must bear: the card-
inal's this,

Mine uncle's of Lorraine, to whose
kind hand

Did I commend the first news of my
flight

Sent from Lord Seyton's while our
horses breathed;

By this shall he receive my mind writ
large,

And turn his own to help me. Look
you say

Even as I write, you left me in such
mind

As he would know me, — for all past
faults done

Bent but to seek of God and of the
world

Pardon; as knowing that none but only
God

Has brought me out of bonds, and inly
fixed

In perfect purpose for his mercy shown
To show a thankful and a constant

heart,
As simple woman or as queen of Scots,

In life and death fast cleaving to his
Church,

As I would have him that shall read
believe

My life to come shall only from his lips
Take shape and likeness, by their breath

alone
Still swayed and steered; to whom you

know I look
For reconciling words that may subdue

To natural pity of my laboring cause
The queen that was my mother, and

her son
My brother king that in my husband's

seat
Sits lineal in succession. Say too this,

That without help I may not hold mine
own;

And therefore shall he stand the more
my friend,

And do the kindlier, the more haste he
makes

With all good speed to raise and to
despatch

A levy of a thousand harquebusmen
To fill the want up of my ranks, that

yet
Look leaner than mine enemies'. This

for France.

And this to the English queen deliver-
 ing say,
 I look, being free now, for that help of
 hers
 That in my last years' bonds not once
 or twice
 I had by word of promise, and not
 doubt
 This year to have indeed; which if I
 may,
 When from her hand I take my crown
 again,
 I shall thenceforth look for no other
 friend,
 And try no further faith. This private
 word
 In London to the ambassador of Spain
 Fail not to bear, that being set round
 with spies
 I may not write; but he shall tell his
 king
 The charges that men cast on me are
 false,
 And theirs the guilt that held me in
 their bonds
 Who stand in spirit firm to one faith
 with him
 From whom I look for counsel. I well
 think
 My sister's love shall but desire to hold
 A mean betwixt our parties, and pro-
 nounce
 On each side judgment, as by right and
 might
 'Twixt mine and me the imperial medi-
 atress,
 Commanding peace, controlling war,
 that must
 Determine this dark time, and make
 alone
 An end of doubt and danger; which
 perchance
 May come before her answer. Haste,
 and thrive.

[Exit BEATON.]

Now, what say you? shall fortune stand
 our friend
 But long enough to seem worth hope
 or fear,
 Or fall too soon from us for hope to
 help
 r fear to hurt more than an hour of
 chance

Might make and unmake? This were
 now my day
 To try the soothsaying of men's second
 sight
 Who read beyond the writing of the
 hour,
 And utter things unborn: now would
 I know,
 And yet I would not, how my life shall
 move
 And toward what end forever; which
 to know
 Should help me not to suffer, nor
 undo
 One jot that must be done or borne
 of me,
 Nor take one grain away. I would not
 know it;
 For one thing haply might that knowl-
 edge do,
 Or one thing undo,—to bring down
 the heart
 Wherewith I now expect it. We shall
 know,
 When we shall suffer, what God's hour
 will bring;
 If filled with wrath full from his heavy
 hand,
 Or gently laid upon us. I do think,
 If he were wroth with aught once done
 of me,
 That anger should be now fulfilled, and
 this
 His hour of comfort; for he should not
 stand,
 For his wrath's sake with me, mine
 enemies' friend,
 Who are more than mine his enemies.
 Never yet
 Did I desire to know of God or man
 What was designed me of them; nor
 will now
 For fear desire the knowledge. What
 I may,
 That will I foil of all men's enmities,
 And what I may of hope and good
 success
 Take, and praise God. Yet thus much
 would I know,
 If in your sight, who have seen my
 whole life run
 One stream with yours since either had
 its spring,

My chance to come look foul or fair
again

By this day's light and likelihood.

Mary Beaton. In sooth,
No soothsayer am I; yet so far a seer,
That I can see but this of you and me,
We shall not part alive.

Queen. Dost thou mean well?
Thou hast been constant ever at my
hand

And closest when the worst part of my
fate

Came closest to me; firm as faith or
love

Hast thou stood by my peril and my
pain,

And still, where I found these, there
found I thee;

And where I found thee, these were
not far off.

When I was proud and blithe (men
said) of heart,

And life looked smooth and loving in
mine eyes,

Thou wouldst be sad and cold as au-
tumn winds,

Thy face discomfortable, and strange
thy speech,

Thy service joyless; but when times
grew hard,

And there was wind and fire in the
clear heaven,

Then wast thou near; thy service and
thy speech

Were glad and ready; in thine eyes thy
soul

Seemed to sit fixed at watch as one
that waits

And knows, and is content with what
shall be.

Nor can I tell now if thy sight should
put

More faith in me, or fear, to trust or
doubt

The chance forefigured in thee; for
thou art

As 'twere my fortune, faithful as man's
fate,

Inevitable. I cannot read the roll
That I might deem were hidden in thy
hand,

Writ with my days to be, nor from
thine eyes

Take light to know; for fortune is too
blind

As man that knows not of her; and
thyself,

That art as 'twere a type to me and
sign

Incognizable, art no more wise than I
To say what I should hope and fear to
learn,

Or why, from thee.

Mary Beaton. This one thing I know
well,

That hope nor fear need think to feed
upon,

That I should part from you alive, or
you

Take from me living mine assurance yet
To look upon you while you live, and
trace

To the grave's edge your printed feet
with mine.

Queen. Wilt thou die too?

Mary Beaton. Should I so far, so
long,

Follow my queen's face, to forsake at
last,

And lose my name for constancy? or
you,

Whose eyes alive have slain so many
men,

Want, when death shuts them, one to
die of you

Dying, who had so many loving lives
To go before you living?

Queen. Thou dost laugh
Always, to speak of death; and at this
time

God wot it should beseem us best to
smile

If we must think upon him. I and thou
Have so much in us of a single heart,

That we can smile to hear of that or
see

Which sickens and makes bleed faint
hearts for fear.

And well now shall it stand us both in
stead

To make ours hard against all chance,
and walk

Between our friends and foes indiffer-
ently

As who may think to see them one day
shift

From hate to love, and love again to hate,
 As time with peaceable or warlike hand
 Shall carve and shape them; and to go thus forth,
 And make an end, shall neither at my need
 Deject me nor uplift in spirit, who pass
 Not gladly nor yet loathly to the field
 That these my present friends have in my name
 Set for the trial of my death or life.
 Thou knowest long since God gave me cause to say
 I saw the world was not that joyous thing
 Which men would make it, nor the happiest they
 That lived the longest in it: so I thought
 That year the mightiest of my kinsmen fell,
 Slain by strong treason; and these five years gone
 Have lightened not so much my life to me,
 That I should love it more, or more should loathe
 That end which love or loathing, faith or fear,
 Can put not back nor forward by a day.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX. — LANGSIDE.

MURRAY, MORTON, HUME, LINDSAY,
 OCHILTREE, SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS,
 KIRKALDY, and their forces.

Murray. They cannot pass our place
 of vantage here,
 To choose them out a likelier. Let our lines
 Lie close on either side the hollow strait
 Flanked as the hill slopes by those cottage walls,
 While here the head of our main force
 stands fast
 With wings flung each way forth: that narrow street
 Shall take them snared and naked.

Sir W. Douglas. I beseech you,
 If you suspect no taint or part in me
 Of treason in our kin, that I may have
 The first of this day's danger

Murray. No man here,
 Of all whose hearts are armed for Scotland,
 hath
 First place in this day's peril, no man last;
 But all one part of peril, and one place
 To stand and strike, if God be good to us,
 In the last field that shall be fought for her
 Upon this quarrel. Who are they that lead
 The main of the queen's battle?

Kirkaldy. On their left
 Lord Herries, and Argyle in front
 with him
 Claude Hamilton and James of Evandale
 Bring up their turbulent ranks.
Lindsay. Why, these keep none
 That crowd against us; horse and mingled foot
 Confound each other hurtling as they come
 Sheer up between the houses.

Murray. Some default
 That maims the general strength has in their need
 Held them an hour delaying; our harquebusmen,
 Two thousand tried, the best half of our foot,
 Keep the way fast each side even to this height
 Where stands our strength in the open.
 We shall have,
 If aught win through of all their chivalry,
 Some sharp half-hour of hand-to-hand at last
 Ere one thrust other from this brow. —
 Lord Hume,
 Keep you the rear of our right wing that looks
 Toward Herries and his horsemen;
 Ochiltree,
 Stand you beside him; Grange and Lindsay here
 Shall bide with me the main front of their fight
 When these break through our guard
 Let word be given

That no man when the day is won shall dare
Upon our side to spill one drop of blood
That may be spared of them that yield
or fly. [Exeunt.

SCENE X.—ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD.

Enter HERRIES and SEYTON, with their soldiers.

Herries. If they of our part hold the hill-top yet,
For all our leader's loss we have the day.

Seyton. They stand this half-hour locked on both sides fast,
And grappling to the teeth. I would to God

When for faint heart and very fear
Argyle

Fell from his horse before the battle met,

The devil had writhed his neck round;
whose delay

At point to charge first maimed us; else
by this

We had scattered them as crows.
Make up again,

And drive their broken lines in on the rear

While those in front stand doubtful.
Charge once more,

Enter OCHILTREE and HUME, with soldiers.

And all this side is ours. — Lord Ochil-tree,

Yield, in the queen's name.

Ochiltree. In the king's I stand
To bid his traitors battle.

[*They fight; OCHILTREE falls.*

Herries. Stand thou too,
Or give us place: I had rather have to-day

At my sword's end thee than a meaner man

To try this cause.

Hume. This edge of mine shall try
Which side and steel be truer.

[*They fight; HUME is wounded.*

Seyton. God and the queen!
Set on; this height once ours, this day is too,

And all days after

Herries. Halt not yet, good friends,
Till with our bright swords we have crowned the hill

Whereon they stand at grapple. Close again,

And we ride lords at large of the free field

Whence these fall hurled in sunder.

Seyton. To the height!

Our fellows are fast locked yet with our foes:

Make up there to their comfort.

Enter LINDSAY, KIRKALDY, SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS, young OCHILTREE, with soldiers.

Lindsay. Sirs, not yet:

Ere ye win through, there be more spears to break

Than there in fight are fastened. Stand, or yield.

Herries. The Highland folk that doubtfully held off

Are fallen upon our flank: hear you the noise?

Back, sirs, bear back: we are sped.

[*Exit with his followers.*

Seyton. The day is gone:

Let life go after; for I will not fly
To meet my queen's face as a beaten man.

Enter MURRAY, MORTON, etc., with soldiers.

Murray. Charge once, and then sheathe swords; the field is ours:

They fly now both ways broken. Some one spur

To bid those knaves that howl upon the rear

Cut short their quest of blood. They were too slack

Who are now so hot, when first the hunt was up:

They shall not flesh those fangs on flying men

That in the fight were bloodless.

Seyton. Men, stand fast;

Let not the currish cry of Highland hounds

Bark on your fugitive quarry: here a man

May fall not like a stag or harried hare,

But die more soldier-like than in the
toils

With their loud pack upon him.

Young Ochiltree. Die then here,
And pay me for my father, if God
please

My life with his shall lie not on thy
hand,

But thine on mine as forfeit.

[*They fight*; SEYTON falls.

Murray. Slay him not:

I say, put up your sword.

Young Ochiltree. Sir, pardon me.

There bleeds my father yet: he too
shall die.

Murray. Young man, nor he nor any
of his part

When I say, Live. Take up your sword
again;

And by this hand that struck it from
your own

Be ruled, and learn what loyal use it
hath,

Which is not on its prisoner. Send
forth word

That none take life of any man that
yields.

Pursue, but slay not; for the day is won,
And this last battle ended that shall see

By Scottish hands the reek of Scots-
men slain

Defame the face of Scotland. While
I live,

If God as on this day be good to her,
Her eyes shall look on her own blood

no more. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE XI.—THE HEIGHTS NEAR
LANGSIDE.

*The QUEEN, MARY BEATON, FLEMING,
BOYD, and young MAXWELL.*

Queen. This is the last time I shall
look on war:

Upon this day I know my fate is set
As on a sword's point. Does the fight

stand still,
That we see nothing on that hill's brow

stir
Where both sides lashed together?

Fleming. If the light
Tell mine eyes truth that reel with

watching, both
Stand with spears crossed and locked

so hard, and points

So fast inwound with such inveteracy,
That steel can thrust not steel an inch
away,

Nor foot push foot a hair's-breadth
back that hangs

On the hill's edge, and yields not.
Hark! the noise

Grows sharper and more various in its
cry

Than first it was: there comes upon the
day

Some change for good or ill; but for
my charge,

I would not say, *Would God my hand
were there!*

But take its chance upon it.

Queen. Be content

To stand this day our soldier at her side
Who will not live to lay such charge

again
On them that love her. Lo there! on
the left

They charge again from our part.

Maxwell. There it is

My father fights: his horse are they
that make

The hill's length rock and lighten as a
sea.

Look where the waves meet as that
wind of steeds

Sweeps them together; how they reel
and fall

There with the shock from under of
the storm

That takes in rear and breaks their
guard, and leaves

The right wing of the rebels cloven in
twain,

And in the cleft their first men fallen
that stood

Against the sea-breach. Oh! this gal-
lant day

Shows us our fortune fair as her fair
face

For whom we came to seek it, and the
crown

That it gives back more glorious.

Queen. If we knew

How fares our van— Nay, go not
from me one,

Lest we be scattered.

Boyd. Hear you not a cry
As from the rear, a note of ruin, sent

Higher than the noise of horsemen ;
and therewith

A roar of fire as though the artillery
there

Spake all at once its heart untimely out ?

Pray God our powder be not spent by
chance,

And in its waste undo us !

Queen. My heart is sick,

Yet shall it not subdue me while my
will

Hath still a man's strength left. I was
not thus —

I will not think what ever I have been.

The worst day lasts no longer than a
day,

And its worst hour hath but an hour of
life

Wherein to work us evil.

Mary Beaton. Here comes one
Hot-spurred with haste, and pale with
this hour's news :

Now shall we know what work it had
to do,

And what the next hour may.

Enter GEORGE DOUGLAS.

George Douglas. The day is lost.

There is but one way with us ; here we
stand

As in death's hand already. You must
fly,

Madam, while time be left or room for
flight,

As if there be I know not.

Fleming. Is the van

Broken ?

George Douglas. Look up where late
it stood so fast

That well-nigh for an hour the grappling
ranks

Were so enlinked in front, the men be-
hind

That fired across the rank of them be-
fore,

And hurled their pistols in their ene-
mies' face

Above their comrades' heads that held
the van

Saw them yet reeking on the spear-
shafts lodged

That caught them flatlong fallen athwart
the staves

Fixed opposite and level, till a shot

Slew him that led behind the artillery
up

As the first round was ended on our
part,

And straight a gunner's linstock
dropped, and gave

Fire to the powder-wagon.

Maxwell. But the horse —

We saw my father's with Lord Seyton's
horse

Hurl up against the left side round the
hill,

And break their right wing in the rear.

George Douglas. Ye saw ?

But not who brought them rescue, and
bore back

Your father's force with might and ruin :
Grange

And Lindsay, with my brother third,
who fights

With the more bitter heart and hate to-
day

For our name's sake to purge him of
my deed,

And wreak him on my friends ; and
would to God,

But for the service's sake I had to do,

He had met me whom perchance he
sought, and slain,

Ere I had borne this news out of the
fight

To bid you fly !

Queen. Where will God set mine end ?
I am wearied of this flying from death

to death
That is my life, and man's : where'er I
go,

From God and death I fly not ; and
even here

It may be they must find me.

Mary Beaton. Nay, not yet :

Take heart again, and fly.

Queen. Oh ! this I knew, —

Even by thine eyes I knew it a great
while since

As now by mine. Our end of fear is
come,

That casts out hope as well. Let us
make hence.

Perchance our help is in Dumbarton
yet,

Upon the rock where I would fain at
first

Have set my feet. — How say you, Flem-
ing, now?

May we there make us fast?

George Douglas. The ways are
thronged

With arms and noise of enemies;
everywhere

The land is full of death and deadly
cries

From throats that gape for blood; the
regent's horse

Hold all the highway; and the straiter
lanes

Stand thick with peasant folk whose
hands are armed

With staves and sickles in their rage
caught up

To strike at you for fault of sword or
pike

Wherewith to charge us flying: no way
is left

But south to Galloway and Lord Her-
ries' land,

Where you may breathe but for a
doubtful day

In the sea's sight of refuge.

Maxwell. In God's name,
Take his good counsel, madam; as you
know

The noble Douglas wise and true, be-
lieve

So shall you find my father's men and
mine

In this great need.

Queen. Come, help me then to horse;
If I must ride some hundred miles to
breathe,

As we must fly no less, I think, or fall
Among our foes that follow, in my
mind

The worst it were not, nor the unkind-
liest death,

To die in saddle. I will not give again,
So please it God, into mine enemies'
hands

My body up for bondage. Twice or
thrice

I have ridden hard by stars of March
or May,

With false or true men to my left and
right,

The wild night through, for death or
kingly life;

And if I ride now with few friends at
hand,

I have none false of them; or if as
once

One ride with me that had my hate
alive,

Who rode with me to his own grave,
and now

Holds me in chase toward mine, — O
thou that wast

My hate and husband, whom these men
to-day

Take on them to revenge, and in thy
name

Turn all men's hearts against me that
were born

Mine, and all swords that served me!
if thou be

A shadow at hand, a ghost uncon-
ciled,

That waits to take his triumph, hear
and see

If in this hour that smites me, which is
thine,

Thou find one thought in me that bows
my heart,

One pang that turns it from the thing
it was,

One pulse that moves me to repent or
fear

For what was done or shall be; if thou
have

But so much power upon me to be
called

Less hateful or more fearful, and thy
death

With aught of dread have clothed the
thought of thee

That thy life had not; if thou seest me
fly,

Then must thou see too that thou shalt
not see,

In death or life, one part of spirit or
sense

In me that calls thee master. To God's
hand

I give the rest; but in mine own I hold
The perfect power for good or evil
days

To keep the heart I had, and on my-
self

Lose not one jot of lordship: so may
God

Love me no less, and be no slower, I
 think,
 To help my soul than theirs more vile
 than mine
 And made for chance to mar, whereon
 their fate
 Has power as on their bodies. If he
 will,
 Now should he help, or never; for we
 leave
 A field more fatal to us, and day more
 foul,
 Than ever cast out hope. I am loath
 to go
 More than to die; yet, come what will
 soe'er,
 I shall no more. — Thou told'st me not
 of this,

[To MARY BEATON.

But yet I learnt it of thee. Come, we
 have
 One dark day less of doom to see and
 live,
 Who have seen this, and die not. Stay
 by me:
 I know thou wilt; if I should bid thee
 go,
 It were but even as if I bade thee
 stay
 Who hast as far to flee from death as I.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XII. — DUNDRENNAN ABBEY.

The QUEEN and HERRIES.

Queen. Talk not to me of France.
 this man it was
 That gave his tongue to serve my kins-
 men's plea,
 Who fain had seen me plight at
 Hamilton
 To their Arbroath my hand and king-
 dom; nay,
 I will not seek my fate at Catherine's
 hand,
 Nor on those lips that were my moth-
 er's watch
 My life hang weighed between a word
 and smile,
 Nor on that sleek face of the Floren-
 tine
 Read my doom writ, nor in her smooth
 swart cheek

See the blood brighten with desire o'
 mine.
 I will not live or die upon her tongue
 Whose hate were glad to give me death
 or life
 More hateful from her giving; and I
 know
 How she made proffer to my last year's
 lords
 To take me from their bondage to her
 own,
 And shut my days up cloistered; even
 such love
 Should France afford me now that in
 men's sight
 I stand yet lower, as fallen from this
 year's hope
 To live disowned forever. Tell him
 this
 Who rode with you behind me from
 the field,
 And bid him bear his mistress word
 of me
 As one that thinks not to be made the
 mean
 For them to weave alliance with my
 foes,
 And with the purchase of my bartered
 blood
 Buy back their power in Scotland.

Herries. I shall say it.

Yet this man's friendship, madam,
 might find faith,
 Who by so wild a way has followed
 you
 To this third day that sees your flight
 at end,
 Where you may sit some forty days
 secure
 In trust and guard of mine.
Queen. Ay, here I might,
 Were I well weary with my two nights'
 sleep
 On this hard earth that was my naked
 bed
 Whom it casts out of kingdom; but,
 my lord,
 For thirty leagues and more of ridden
 ground,
 And two days' fare of peasants' meal
 and milk,
 I am not yet nigher but by two days to
 death,

Nor spent in spirit for weariness or
 fear,
 Nor in my body broken, that my need
 Should hold me here in bonds, or on
 your faith
 Lay a new charge of danger. Here,
 you say,
 And Beaumont with you, I may bide
 awhile
 The levy of my friends whose rallying
 force
 May gather to me, or in their default
 Hence to Dumbarton may I pass by
 sea,
 Or forth to France with safer sails, and
 prove
 What faith is there in friendship. Now
 my mind
 Is nowise here to tarry: your true love
 Shall not for guerdon of its trust and
 care
 Be tried again with peril, that as well
 May be put by for your faith's sake and
 mine
 So mutually made much of; nor shall
 they,
 Whose wounds run red yet from their
 regent's hand
 That on this border laid so sore a
 scourge
 As late their blood bore witness, for
 my sake
 Or give their blood again, or lose their
 faith
 That should for me be proven, and
 being found true
 Bring them to death should we twice
 fail, or false
 Turn their safe life to shame. This
 shall not be;
 But I, content to make no trial of these,
 Will hold them true, and leave them
 unessay'd
 To live in honor. Friends I yet should
 have
 Whose peace and life lie not in those
 men's hands
 That would make prey of mine; their
 faith is firm
 And their hearts great as mine own
 hope in them
 Who look toward me from England;
 all the north

No less desires me than I need their
 love,
 To lift our creed and cause up that lies
 low,
 But wounded not to death. I have
 their names
 Who first I think will meet me face to
 face,
 And lay their loyal hands in mine, and
 pledge
 Their noble heads for surety; lord and
 knight
 Whose fathers yielded up their lives
 for faith
 Shall fail not now to seek me cast out
 hence,
 And gird me fast with all their follow-
 ing round
 And stalwart musters of their spearmen
 raised
 To do me service of stout heart and
 steel
 For these lords' sake that call me lady;
 names
 That bear the whole might of this north-
 ern land
 Upon their blazon, and the grace and
 strength
 Of their old honor with them to that
 side
 That they shall serve on; first the two
 great earls,
 Then Dacre, Norton, Swinburne, Mark-
 infield,
 With all their houses, all the border's
 flower
 Of ancient faith and fame; had I but
 these
 To rise up when I call, and do me right,
 I were not poorly friended, with no
 more
 Than this for trust to lean on. But I
 think
 To find not such friends only as their
 name
 And cause should make in danger fast
 to mine,
 To link our names in all men's eyes that
 read
 Of faith in man forever: even the queen
 My sister's self shall fight upon my side,
 Being either found my friend for whom
 she swore,

If I were slain, to fill this land with
fires,
Or, casting off my cause and me, stand
up
As much their enemy that partake my
faith
As mine who lack not friends in all her
land
That in this cause cast off will strike at
her
For God's sake on my party. But
indeed
I look to find not such a foe of her
As should have heart or wit to fight
with me,
Though she had will who has not; for
her mind,
Still moving like a blown and barren
sea,
Has yet not ever set so far toward storm
Or so much shifted from its natural
tide
As to seem safe or prosperous for their
sails
Who traffic for my ruin; and I fear
No wind of change that may breathe
sharp on me
When once I stand in mine own name
to speak
Before her face and England's. If she
will,
By her shall I come back to reign her
friend:
If not by her, then by their loves and
hands
Who shall put off her sovereignty for
mine.
There is not and there needs no better
way
Than here lies fair before my feet, which
yet
Are not so tired but they may tread it
through
To the good end. My heart is higher
again
Than ere that field it was, I know not
why,
Which sent me hither. You shall write
for me
Word to the warden of Carlisle, and
say
Your queen seeks covert for her crown-
less head

With him the first in England; and
thereon

Ere he send answer, or to-morrow set,
Will I pass over.

Herries. I would fain believe
His queen were true of heart, and all
your friends

As strong to serve as faithful: yet may
she

Have better will than she has power to
make,

As it would be, your servant; and the
land

Is many-minded, rent with doubt in
twain,

And full of fears and factions. You
may pass,

Even in this hope that now builds up
your heart,

To find less help at no less need than
here

On darker ways and deadlier: yet your
will

Shall if it hold be done.

Queen. Despatch, and write:

To stand before the gate of days to
be,

And beat their doors for entrance, is
more pain

Than to pass in, and look on life or
death.

Here will I sleep within your ward to-
night,

And then no more in Scotland. Nay,
make haste:

I would those hours were past that bold
me here.

SCENE XIII. — THE SHORE OF SOL- WAY FIRTH.

*The QUEEN, MARY BEATON, HERRIES,
GEORGE DOUGLAS, Page and Attend-
ants.*

Queen. Is not the tide yet full?

Herries. Come half an hour,
And it will turn; but ere that ebb begin.
Let me once more desire your pardon,
though

I plead against your pleasure. Here
you stand

Not yet dethroned from royal hope, not
yet

Discrowned of your great name, whose
 natural power
 Faith here forgets not, nor man's loyal
 love
 Leaves off to honor : but gone hence,
 your name
 Is but a stranger's, subject to men's
 laws,
 Alien and liable to control and chance
 That are the lords of exile, and com-
 mand
 The days and nights of fugitives; your
 hope
 Dies of strange breath, or lives between
 strange lips;
 And nor your will nor only God's
 beside
 Is master of your peace of life, but
 theirs
 Who, being the lords of land that har-
 bors you,
 Give your life leave to endure their
 empire. What
 Can man do to you that a rebel
 may,
 Which fear might deem as bad as ban-
 ishment?
 Not death, not bonds, are bitterer than
 his day
 On whom the sun looks forth of a
 strange sky,
 Whose thirst drinks water from strange
 hands, whose lips
 Eat strangers' bread for hunger; who
 lies down
 In a strange dark, and sleeps not, and
 the light
 Makes his eyes weep for their own
 morning, seen
 On hills that helped to make him man,
 and fields
 Whose flowers grew round his heart's
 root; day like night
 Denies him, and the stars and airs of
 heaven
 Are as their eyes and tongues who know
 him not.
 Go not to banishment: the world is
 great,
 But each has but his own land in the
 world.
 There is one bosom that gives each
 man milk, —

One country, like one mother: none
 sleeps well
 Who lies between strange breasts; no
 lips drink life
 That seek it from strange fosters. Go
 not hence:
 You shall find no man's faith or love on
 earth
 Like theirs that here cleave to you.
Queen. I have found,
 And think to find, no hate of men on
 earth
 Like theirs that here beats on me
 Hath this earth
 Which sent me forth a five-years' child,
 and queen
 Not even of mine own sorrows, to come
 back
 A widowed girl out of the fair warm
 sun
 Into the grave's mouth of a dolorous
 land
 And life like death's own shadow, that
 began
 With three days' darkness, — hath this
 earth of yours
 That made mine enemies, at whose
 iron breast
 They drank the milk of treason; this
 hard nurse,
 Whose rocks and storms have reared
 no violent thing
 So monstrous as men's angers, whose
 wild minds
 Were fed from hers and fashioned;
 this that bears
 None but such sons as being my friends
 are weak,
 And strong, being most my foes, — hath
 it such grace
 As I should cling to, or such virtue
 found
 In some part of its evil as my heart
 Should fear, being free, to part from?
 Have I lived,
 Since I came here in shadow and storm,
 three days
 Out of the storm and shadow? Have
 I seen
 Such rest, such hope, such respite from
 despair,
 As thralls and prisoners in strong dark
 ness may

Before the light look on them? Hath
 there come
 One chance on me of comfort, one poor
 change,
 One possible content that was not born
 Of hope to break forth of these bonds,
 or made
 Of trust in foreign fortune? Here, I
 knew,
 Could never faith nor love nor comfort
 breed
 While I sat fast in prison: ye, my
 friends,
 The few men and the true men that
 were mine,
 What were ye but what I was, and
 what help
 Hath each love had of other, yours of
 mine,
 Mine of your faith, but change of fight
 and flight,
 Fear and vain hope and ruin? Let me
 go,
 Who have been but grief and danger to
 my friends:
 It may be I shall come with power
 again
 To give back all their losses, and build
 up
 What for my sake was broken.
Herries. Did I know it,
 Yet were I loath to bid you part, and
 find
 What there you go to seek; but know-
 ing it not,
 My heart sinks in me, and my spirit is
 sick,
 To think how this fair foot once parted
 hence
 May rest thus light on Scottish ground
 no more.
Queen. It shall tread heavier when it
 steps again
 On earth which now rejects it; I shall
 live
 To bruise their heads who wounded me
 at heel,
 When I shall set it on their necks.
 Come, friends,
 I think the fisher's boat hath hoised up
 sail
 That is to bear none but one friend and
 me:

Here must my true men and their
 queen take leave,
 And each keep thought of other. — My
 fair page,
 Before the man's change darken on
 your chin,
 I may come back to ride with you at
 rein
 To a more fortunate field. howe'er
 that be,
 Ride you right on with better hap, and
 live
 As true to one of merrier days than
 mine
 As on that night to Mary once your
 queen.
 Douglas, I have not won a word of
 you:
 What would you do to have me tarry?
George Douglas. Die.
Queen. I lack not love, it seems, then,
 at my last.
 That word was bitter; yet I blame it
 not,
 Who would not have sweet words upon
 my lips
 Nor in mine ears at parting. I should
 go,
 And stand not here as on a stage to
 play
 My last part out in Scotland: I have
 been
 Too long a queen too little. By my
 life,
 I know not what should hold me here,
 or turn
 My foot back from the boat-side, save
 the thought
 How at Lochleven I last set foot
 aboard,
 And with what hope, and to what end,
 and now
 I pass not out of prison to my friends,
 But out of all friends' help to banish
 ment. —
 Farewell, Lord Herries.
Herries. God go with my queen,
 And bring her back with better friends
 than I!
Queen. Methinks the sand yet cleav-
 ing to my foot
 Should not with no more words be
 shaken off,

Nor this my country from my parting
 eyes
 Pass unsaluted; for who knows what
 year
 May see us greet hereafter? Yet take
 heed,
 Ye that have ears, and hear me; and
 take note,
 Ye that have eyes, and see with what
 last looks
 Mine own take leave of Scotland.
 Seven years since
 Did I take leave of my fair land of
 France,
 My joyous mother, mother of my joy,
 Weeping; and now with many a woe
 between,
 And space of seven years' darkness, I
 depart
 From this distempered and unnatural
 earth
 That casts me out unmothered, and go
 forth
 On this gray, sterile, bitter, gleaming
 sea
 With neither tears nor laughter, but a
 heart
 That from the softest temper of its
 blood
 Is turned to fire and iron. If I live,
 If God pluck not all hope out of my
 hand,
 If aught of all mine prosper, I that go
 Shall come back to men's ruin, as a
 flame
 The wind bears down, that grows
 against the wind,
 And grasps it with great hands, and
 wins its way,
 And wins its will, and triumphs; so
 shall I
 Let loose the fire of all my heart to
 feed
 On these that would have quenched it.
 I will make
 From sea to sea one furnace of the
 land,
 Whereon the wind of war shall beat its
 wings

Till they wax faint with hopeless hope
 of rest,
 And with one rain of men's rebellious
 blood
 Extinguish the red embers. I will leave
 No living soul of their blaspheming
 faith
 Who war with monarchs: God shall
 see me reign
 As he shall reign beside me, and his
 foes
 Lie at my foot with mine; kingdoms
 and kings
 Shall from my heart take spirit, and at
 my soul
 Their souls be kindled to devour for
 prey
 The people that would make its prey
 of them,
 And leave God's altar stripped of sac-
 rament
 As all kings' heads of sovereignty, and
 make
 Bare as their thrones his temples; I
 will set
 Those old things of his holiness on
 high
 That are brought low, and break be-
 neath my feet
 These new things of men's fashion; I
 will sit
 And see tears flow from eyes that saw
 me weep,
 And dust and ashes and the shadow of
 death
 Cast from the block beneath the axe
 that falls
 On heads that saw me humbled; I will
 do it,
 Or bow mine own down to no royal
 end,
 And give my blood for theirs if God's
 will be,
 But come back never as I now go forth
 With but the hate of men to track my
 way,
 And not the face of any friend alive.
Mary Beaton. But I will never leave
 you till you die.

MARY STUART: A TRAGEDY.

ἀντί μὲν ἔχθρᾶς γλώσσης ἔχθρᾶ
 πλάσσεια τελεισθῶ· τοῦφειλόμενον
 πρᾶσσουσα δικὴ μέγ' αὐτεῖ·

ἀντί δὲ πληγῆς φονίας φονίαν
 πληγὴν τινετῶ· δράσαντι παθεῖν,
 τριγερῶν μῦθος τὰδε φωνεῖ.

ÆSCH. *Cho.* 309-315.

I DEDICATE THIS PLAY, NO LONGER, AS THE FIRST PART OF THE TRILOGY WHICH IT COMPLETES WAS DEDICATED, TO THE GREATEST EXILE, BUT SIMPLY TO THE GREATEST MAN OF FRANCE; TO THE CHIEF OF LIVING POETS; TO THE FIRST DRAMATIST OF HIS AGE; TO MY BELOVED AND REVERED MASTER, VICTOR HUGO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARY STUART.
 MARY BEATON.
 QUEEN ELIZABETH.
 BARBARA MOWBRAY.
 LORD BURGHLEY.
 SIR FRANCIS WALSHINGHAM.
 WILLIAM DAVISON.
 ROBERT DUDLEY, *Earl of Leicester.*
 GEORGE TALBOT, *Earl of Shrewsbury.*
 EARL OF KENT.
 HENRY CAREY, *Lord Hunsdon.*
 SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON.
 SIR THOMAS BROMLEY, *Lord Chancellor.*
 POPHAM, *Attorney-General.*
 EGERTON, *Solicitor-General.*
 GAWDY, *the Queen's Sergeant.*
 SIR AMYAS PAULET.
 SIR DREW DRURY.

SIR THOMAS GORGES.
 SIR WILLIAM WADE.
 SIR ANDREW MELVILLE.
 ROBERT BEALE, *Clerk of the Council.*
 CURLE and NAU, *Secretaries to the Queen of Scots.*
 GORION, *her Apothecary.*
 FATHER JOHN BALLARD,
 ANTHONY BABINGTON,
 CHIDIOCK TICHBORNE,
 JOHN SAVAGE,
 CHARLES TILNEY,
 EDWARD ABINGTON,
 THOMAS SALISBURY,
 ROBERT BARNWELL,
 THOMAS PHILLIPS, *Secretary to Walsingham.*
 M. DE CHÂTEAUNEUF.
 M. DE BELLIÈVRE.

Conspirators.

Commissioners, Privy Councillors, Sheriffs, Citizens, Officers, and Attendants.

TIME, FROM AUGUST 14, 1586, TO FEBRUARY 18, 1587.

ACT I.—ANTHONY BABINGTON.

SCENE I.—BABINGTON'S LODGING. *A Veiled Picture on the Wall.*

Enter BABINGTON, TICHBORNE, TILNEY, ABINGTON, SALISBURY, and BARNWELL.

Babington. Welcome, good friends,
 and welcome this good day

That casts out hope, and brings in certainty
 To turn raw spring to summer. Now
 not long
 The flower that crowns the front of all
 our faiths
 Shall bleach to death in prison; now
 the trust
 That took the night with fire as of a star
 Grows red and broad as sunrise in our
 sight,

Who held it dear and desperate once,
 now sure,
 But not more dear, being surer. In my
 hand
 I hold this England and her brood, and
 all
 That time out of the chance of all her
 fate
 Makes hopeful or makes fearful: days
 and years,
 Triumphs and changes bred for praise
 or shame
 From the unborn womb of these un-
 known, are ours
 That stand yet noteless here; ours even
 as God's,
 Who puts them in our hand as his, to
 wield
 And shape to service godlike. None
 of you
 But this day strikes out of the scroll of
 death,
 And writes apart immortal: what we
 would,
 That have we; what our fathers, breth-
 ren, peers,
 Bled and beheld not, died and might
 not win,
 That may we see, touch, handle, hold it
 fast,
 May take to bind our brows with. By
 my life,
 I think none ever had such hap alive
 As ours upon whose plighted lives are
 set
 The whole good hap and evil of the
 State,
 And of the Church of God, and world of
 men,
 And fortune of all crowns and creeds
 that hang
 Now on the creed and crown of this our
 land,
 To bring forth fruit to our resolve, and
 bear
 What sons to time it please us; whose
 mere will
 Is father of the future.

Tilney. Have you said?

Babington. I cannot say too much of
 so much good.

Tilney. Say nothing, then, a little, and
 hear one while:

Your talk struts high and swaggers
 loud for joy,
 And safely may perchance, or may not,
 here;

But why to-day we know not.

Babington. No, I swear,
 Ye know not yet, no man of us but one,
 No man on earth; one woman knows,
 and I,

I that best know her, the best begot of
 man

And noblest: no king born so kingly
 souled,

Nor served of such brave servants.

Tichborne. What, as we?

Babington. Is there one vein in one of
 all our hearts

That is not blown aflame as fire with
 air

With even the thought to serve her?
 And, by God,

They that would serve had need be
 bolder found

Than common kings find servants.

Salisbury. Well, your cause?

What need or hope has this day's heat
 brought forth

To blow such fire up in you?

Babington. Hark you, sirs:

The time is come, ere I shall speak of
 this,

To set again the seal on our past oaths,
 And bind their trothplight faster than
 it is

With one more witness; not for shame-
 ful doubt,

But love and perfect honor. Gentlemen,
 Whose souls are brethren sealed and
 sworn to mine,

Friends that have taken on your hearts
 and hands

The selfsame work and weight of deed
 as I, —

Look on this picture: from its face to-
 day

Thus I pluck off the muffled mask, and
 bare

Its likeness and our purpose. Ay, look
 here;

None of these faces but are friends of
 each,

None of these lips unsworn to all the
 rest,

None of these hands unplighted. Know ye not	On such hot wheels toward evil goals or good,
What these have bound their souls to? And myself,	And desperate each as other; but that each,
I that stand midmost painted here of all,	Seeing here himself and knowing why here, may set
Have I not right to wear of all this ring	His whole heart's might on the instant work, and hence
The topmost flower of danger? Who but I	Pass as a man rechristened, bathed anew,
Should crown and close this goodly circle up	And swordlike tempered from the touch that turns
Of friends I call my followers? There ye stand,	Dull iron to the two-edged fang of steel Made keen as fire by water. So, I say,
Fashioned all five in likeness of mere life,	Let this dead likeness of you, wrought with hands
Just your own shapes, even all the man but speech,	Whereof ye wist not, working for mine end
As in a speckless mirror; Tichborne, thou,	Even as ye gave them work, unwittingly, Quickened with life your vows and pur- poses
My nearest heart and brother next in deed,	To rid the beast that troubles all the world
Then Abington, there Salisbury, Tilney there,	Out of men's sight and God's. Are ye not sworn
And Barnwell, with the brave bright Irish eye	Or stand not ready girt at perilous need To strike under the cloth of state itself The very heart we hunt for?
That burns with red remembrance of the blood	<i>Tichborne.</i> Let not then
Seen drenching those green fields turned brown and gray	Too high a noise of hound and horn give note
Where fire can burn not faith out, nor the sword	How hot the hunt is on it, and ere we shoot
That hews the boughs off lop the root there set	Startle the royal quarry; lest your cry Give tongue too loud on such a trail, and we
To spread in spite of axes. Friends, take heed:	More piteously be rent of our own hounds
These are not met for nothing here in show,	Than he that went forth huntsman too, and came
Nor for poor pride set forth and boast- ful heart	To play the hart he hunted.
To make dumb brag of the undone deed, and wear	<i>Babington.</i> Ay, but, see,
The ghost and mockery of a crown unearned	Your apish poet's-likeness holds not here,
Before their hands have wrought it for their heads	If he that fed his hounds on his changed flesh
Out of a golden danger, glorious doubt, An act incomparable, by all time's mouths	Was charmed out of a man, and bayed to death,
To be more blessed and cursed than all deeds done	But through pure anger of a perfect maid;
In this swift fiery world of ours, that drives	For she that should of huntsmen turn us harts

Is Dian but in mouths of her own
knaves,
And in paid eyes hath only godhead on,
And light to dazzle none but them to
death.

Yet I durst well abide her, and proclaim
As goddess-like as maiden.

Barnwell. Why, myself
Was late at court in presence, and her
eyes

Fixed somewhere on me full in face; yet,
'faith,

I felt for that no lightning in my blood,
Nor blast in mine as of the sun at noon
To blind their balls with godhead: no,
ye see,

I walk yet well enough.

Abington. She gazed at you?

Barnwell. Yes, 'faith: yea, surely:
take a Puritan oath

To seal my faith for Catholic. What,
God help,

Are not mine eyes yet whole, then? am
I blind

Or maimed or scorched, and know not?
By my head,

I find it sit yet none the worse for fear
To be so thunder-blasted.

Abington. Hear you, sirs?

Tichborne. I was not fain to hear it.

Barnwell. Which was he
Spake of one changed into a hart? by
God,

There be some hearts here need no
charm, I think,

To turn them hares of hunters; or if
deer,

Not harts but hinds, and rascal.

Babington. Peace, man, peace!

Let not at least this noble cry of hounds
Flash fangs against each other. See
what verse

I bade write under on the picture here:
*These are my comrades, whom the peril's
self*

Draws to it. How say you? will not all
in the end

Prove fellows to me? how should one
fall off

Whom danger lures and scares not?
Tush! take hands;

't was to keep them fast in all time's
sight

I bade my painter set you here, and me
Your loving captain; gave him sight of
each

And order of us all in amity.

And if this yet not shame you, or your
hearts

Be set as boys' on wrangling, yet,
behold,

I pluck as from my heart this witness
forth [Taking out a letter.

To what a work we are bound to,—
even her hand

Whom we must bring from bondage,
and again

Be brought of her to honor. This is
she,

Mary the queen, sealed of herself and
signed

As mine assured good friend forever.
Now,

Am I more worth, or Ballard?

Tilney. He it was

Bade get her hand and seal to allow of
all

That should be practised; he is wise.

Babington. Ay, wise!

He was in peril too, he said, God wot,
And must have surety of her, he; but I,

'Tis I that have it, and her heart and
trust,

See all here else, her trust and her good
love,

Who knows mine own heart of mine
own hand writ

And sent her for assurance.

Salisbury. This we know:

What we would yet have certified of
you

Is her own heart sent back, you say, for
yours.

Babington. I say? not I, but proof
says here, cries out

Her perfect will and purpose. Look
you, first

She writes me what good comfort hath
she had

To know by letter mine estate, and thus
Reknit the bond of our intelligence,

As grief was hers to live without the
same

This great while past; then lovingly
commends

In me her own desire to avert betimes

Our enemies' counsel to root out our
 faith
 With ruin of us all; for so she hath
 shown
 All Catholic princes what long since
 they have wrought
 Against the king of Spain; and all this
 while
 The Catholics naked here to all misuse
 Fall off in numbered force, in means
 and power,
 And if we look not to it shall soon lack
 strength
 To rise and take that hope or help by
 the hand
 Which time shall offer them; and see
 for this
 What heart is hers! she bids you know
 of me
 Though she were no part of this cause,
 who holds
 Worthless her own weighed with the
 general weal, —
 She will be still most willing to this end
 To employ therein her life and all she
 hath
 Or in this world may look for.
Tichborne. This rings well;
 But by what present mean prepared
 doth hers
 Confirm your counsel? or what way set
 forth
 So to prevent our enemies with good
 speed
 That at the goal we find them not, and
 there
 Fall as men broken?
Babington. Nay, what think you, man,
 Or what esteem of her, that hope should
 lack
 Herein her counsel? hath she not been
 found
 Most wary still, clear-spirited, bright of
 wit,
 Keen as a sword's edge, as a bird's eye
 swift,
 Man-hearted ever? First, for crown
 and base
 Of all this enterprise, she bids me here
 Examine with good heed of good event
 What power of horse and foot among
 us all
 We may well muster, and in every shire

Choose out what captain for them, if
 we lack
 For the main host a general, — as, in-
 deed,
 Myself being bound to bring her out of
 bonds,
 Or here with you cut off the heretic
 queen,
 Could take not this on me, — what
 havens, towns,
 What ports to north and west and south,
 may we
 Assure ourselves to hold in certain
 hand
 For entrance and receipt of help from
 France,
 From Spain, or the Low Countries; in
 what place
 Draw our main head together; for how
 long
 Raise for this threefold force of foreign
 friends
 Wage and munition, or what harbors
 choose
 For these to land; or what provision
 crave
 Of coin at need or armor; by what
 means
 The six her friends deliberate to pro-
 ceed;
 And, last, the manner how to get her
 forth
 From this last hold wherein she newly
 lies:
 These heads hath she set down, and
 bids me take
 Of all seven points counsel and com-
 mon care
 With as few friends as may be of the
 chief
 Ranged on our part for actors; and
 thereon
 Of all devised with diligent speed de-
 spatch
 Word to the ambassador of Spain in
 France,
 Who, to the experience past of all the
 estate
 Here on this side aforetime that he hath,
 Shall join goodwill to serve us.
Tilney. Ay, no more?
 Of us no more I mean, who being most
 near

To the English queen our natural mistress born
 Take on our hands, her household pensioners',
 The stain and chiefest peril of her blood
 Shed by close violence under trust; no word,
 No care shown further of our enterprise
 That flowers to fruit for her sake?

Babington. Fear not that;
 Abide till we draw thither — ay — she bids
 Get first assurance of such help to come,
 And take thereafter, what before were vain,
 Swift order to provide arms, horses, coin,
 Wherewith to march at word from every shire
 Given by the chief; and save these principals
 Let no man's knowledge less in place partake
 The privy ground we move on, but set forth
 For entertainment of the meaner ear
 We do but fortify us against the plot
 Laid of the Puritan part in all this realm
 That have their general force now drawn to head
 In the Low Countries, whence being home returned
 They think to spoil us utterly, and usurp
 Not from her only and all else lawful heirs
 The kingly power, but from their queen that is
 (As we may let the bruit fly forth disguised)
 Wrest that which now she hath, if she for fear
 Take not their yoke upon her, and therefrom
 Catch like infection from plague-tainted air
 The purulence of their purity; with which plea
 We so may stablish our confederacies
 As wrought but for defence of lands, lives, goods,
 From them that would cut off our faith and these;

No word writ straight or given directly forth
 Against the queen, but rather showing our will
 Firm to maintain her and her lineal heirs,
Myself (she saith) *not named.* Ha! gallant souls,
 Hath our queen's craft no savor of sweet wit,
 No brain to help her heart with?
Tichborne. But our end —
 No word of this yet?
Babington. And a good word here,
 And worth our note, good friend: being thus prepared,
 Time then shall be to set our hands on work,
 And straight thereon take order that she may
 Be suddenly transported out of guard,
 Not tarrying till our foreign force come in,
 Which then must make the hotter haste; and seeing
 We can make no day sure for our design,
 Nor certain hour appointed when she might
 Find other friends at hand on spur of the act
 To take her forth of prison, ye should have
 About you always, or in court at least,
 Scouts furnished well with horses of good speed
 To bear the tiding to her and them whose charge
 Shall be to bring her out of bonds, that these
 May be about her ere her keeper have word
 What deed is freshly done, — in any case,
 Ere he can make him strong within the house
 Or bear her forth of it; and need it were
 By divers ways to send forth two or three,
 That one may pass if one be stayed — nor this

Should we forget, to assay in the hour
 of need
 To cut the common posts off: by this
 plot
 May we steer safe, and fall not miser-
 ably,
 As they that labored heretofore here-
 in,
 Through over-haste to stir upon this
 side
 Ere surely make us strong of strangers'
 aid.
 And if at first we bring her forth of
 bonds,
 Be well assured, she bids us — as I
 think
 She doubts not me that I should let
 this slip,
 Forget so main a matter — well as-
 sured
 To set her in the heart of some strong
 host,
 Or strength of some good hold, where
 she may stay
 Till we be mustered, and the ally drawn
 in.
 For should the queen, being scathless
 of us yet
 As we unready, fall upon her flight,
 The bird untimely fled from snare to
 snare
 Should find, being caught again, a nar-
 rower hold,
 Whence she should fly forth never, if
 cause indeed
 Should seem not given to use her
 worse; and we
 Should be with all extremity pursued,
 To her more grief; for this should
 grieve her more
 Than what might heaviest fall upon
 her.

Tilney. Ay?

She hath had, then, work enough to do
 to weep
 For them that bled before: Northum-
 berland,
 The choice of all the north, spoiled,
 banished, slain;
 Norfolk, that should have ringed the
 fourth sad time
 The fairest hand wherewith fate ever
 led

So many a man to deathward, or sealed
 up
 So many an eye from sunlight.
Babington. By my head,
 Which is the main stake of this cast, I
 swear
 There is none worth more than a tear
 of hers
 That man wears living or that man
 might lose,
 Borne upright in the sun, or for her
 sake
 Bowed down by theirs she weeps for.
 Nay, but hear:
 She bids me take most vigilant heed,
 that all
 May prosperously find end assured, and
 you
 Conclude with me in judgment; to my-
 self,
 As chief of trust in my particular,
 Refers you for assurance, and com-
 mends
 To counsel seasonable and time's ad-
 vice
 Your common resolution; and again,
 If the design take yet not hold, as
 chance
 For all our will may turn it, we should
 not
 Pursue her transport nor the plot laid
 else
 Of our so baffled enterprise; but say
 When this were done we might not
 come at her,
 Being by mishap close guarded in the
 Tower
 Or some strength else as dangerous,
 yet, she saith,
 For God's sake leave not to proceed
 herein
 To the utmost undertaking; for her-
 self
 At any time shall most contentedly
 Die, knowing of our deliverance from
 the bonds
 Wherein as slaves we are holden.
Barnwell. So shall I,
 Knowing at the least of her enfran-
 chisement
 Whose life were worth the whole blood
 shed o' the world
 And all men's hearts made empty.

Babington. Ay, good friend,
 Here speaks she of your fellows, that
 some stir
 Might be in Ireland labored to begin
 Some time ere we take aught on us,
 that thence
 The alarm might spring right on the
 part opposed
 To where should grow the danger : she
 meantime
 Should while the work were even in
 hand assay
 To make the Catholics in her Scotland
 rise,
 And put her son into their hands, that
 so
 No help may serve our enemies thence ;
 again,
 That from our plots the stroke may
 come, she thinks
 To have some chief or general head of
 all
 Were now most apt for the instant end ;
 wherein
 I branch not off from her in counsel,
 yet
 Conceive not how to send the ap-
 pointed word
 To the earl of Arundel now fast in
 bonds
 Held in the Tower she spake of late,
 who now
 Would have us give him careful note
 of this,
 Him or his brethren ; and from oversea
 Would have us seek, if he be there at
 large,
 To the young son of dead Northum-
 berland,
 And Westmoreland, whose hand and
 name, we know,
 May do much northward ; ay, but this
 we know,
 How much his hand was lesser than his
 name
 When proof was put on either ; and the
 lord
 Paget, whose power is in some shires
 of weight
 To incline them us-ward ; both may
 now be had,
 And some, she saith, of the exiles prin-
 cipal,

If the enterprise be resolute once, with
 these
 May come back darkling ; Paget lies in
 Spain,
 Whom we may treat with by his broth-
 er's mean,
 Charles, who keeps watch in Paris.
 Then in the end
 She bids beware no messenger sent forth
 That bears our counsel bear our letters :
 these
 Must through blind hands precede
 them, or ensue
 By ignorant posts, and severally de-
 spatched ;
 And of her sweet wise heart, as we
 were fools, —
 But that I think she fears not, — bids
 take heed
 Of spies among us and false brethren,
 chief
 Of priests already practised on, she
 saith,
 By the enemy's craft against us. What !
 forsooth,
 We have not eyes to set such knaves
 apart,
 And look their wiles through, but
 should need misdoubt
 — Whom shall I say the least on all
 our side ? —
 Good Gilbert Gifford with his kind
 boy's face
 That fear's lean self could fear not ?
 But God knows
 Woman is wise, but woman : none so
 bold,
 So cunning none, God help the soft
 sweet wit,
 But the fair flesh with weakness taints
 it : why,
 She warns me here of perilous scrolls
 to keep
 That I should never bear about me,
 seeing
 By that fault sank all they that fell
 before
 Who should have walked unwounded
 else of proof,
 Unstayed of justice. But this following
 word
 Hath savor of more judgment : we
 should let

As little as we may our names be
known,
Or purpose here, to the envoy sent from
France,
Whom though she hears for honest, we
must fear
His master holds the course of his
design
Far contrary to this of ours, which
known
Might move him to discovery.

Tichborne. Well forewarned :
Fore-armed enough were now that cause
at need
Which had but half so good an armor
on
To fight false faith or France in
Babington. Peace a while ;
Here she winds up her craft. She hath
long time sued
To shift her lodging, and for answer
hath
None but the castle of Dudley named
as meet
To serve this turn ; and thither may
depart,
She thinks, with parting summer ;
whence may we
Devise what means about those lands
to lay
For her deliverance ; who from present
bonds
May but by one of three ways be dis-
charged :
When she shall ride forth on the moors
that part
Her prison-place from Stafford, where
few folk
Use to pass over, on the same day set,
With fifty or threescore men, well
horsed and armed,
To take her from her keeper's charge,
who rides
With but some score that bear but
pistols ; next,
To come by deep night round the dark-
ling house,
And fire the barns and stables, which
being high
Shall draw the household huddling
forth to help,
And they that come to serve her, wear-
ing each

A secret sign for note and cognizance,
May some of them surprise the house,
whom she
Shall with her servants meet and sec-
ond ; last,
When carts come in at morning, these
being met
In the main gateway's midst may by
device
Fall or be sidelong overthrown, and we
Make in thereon, and suddenly possess
The house, whence lightly might we
bear her forth
Ere help came in of soldiers to relief
Who lie a mile or half a mile away
In several lodgings. But, howe'er this
end,
She holds her bounden to me all her
days,
Who proffer me to hazard for her love,
And doubtless shall as well esteem of
you,
Or scarce less honorably, when she
shall know
Your names who serve beneath me ; so
commends
Her friend to God, and bids me burn
the word
That I would wear at heart forever :
yet,
Lest this sweet scripture haply write
us dead,
Where she set hand I set my lips, and
thus
Rend mine own heart with her sweet
name, and end.

[*Tears the letter.*

Salisbury. She hath chosen a trusty
servant.

Babington. Ay, of me ?

What ails you at her choice ? was this
not I
That laid the ground of all this work,
and wrought
Your hearts to shape for service ? or
perchance
The man was you that took this first
on him,
To serve her dying and living, and
put on
The blood-red name of traitor and the
deed
Found for her sake not murderous ?

Salisbury. Why, they say
 First Gifford put this on you, Ballard
 next,
 Whom he brought over to redeem your
 heart
 Half lost for doubt already, and refresh
 The flagging flame that fired it first, and
 now
 Fell faltering half in ashes, whence his
 breath
 Hardly with hard pains quickened it,
 and blew
 The gray to red rekindling.
Babington. Sir, they lie
 Who say for fear I faltered, or lost
 heart
 For doubt to lose life after: let such
 know
 It shames me not, though I were slow
 of will,
 To take such work upon my soul and
 hand
 As killing of a queen; being once
 assured,
 Brought once past question, set beyond
 men's doubts
 By witness of God's will borne sensibly,
 Meseems I have swerved not.
Salisbury. Ay, when once the word
 Was washed in holy water, you would
 wear
 Lightly the name so hallowed of
 priests' lips
 That men spell murderer; but till Bal-
 lard spake,
 The shadow of her slaying whom we
 shall strike
 Was ice to freeze your purpose.
Tichborne. Friend, what then?
 Is this so small a thing, being English
 born,
 To strike the living empire here at
 heart
 That is called England? stab her pres-
 ent state,
 Give even her false-faced likeness up
 to death,
 With hands that smite a woman? I
 that speak,
 Ye know me if now my faith be firm,
 and will
 To do faith's bidding; yet it wrings
 not me

To say I was not quick nor light of
 heart,
 Though moved perforce of will un-
 willingly,
 To take in trust this charge upon me.
Barnwell. I
 With all good will would take, and give
 God thanks,
 The charge of all that falter in it: by
 heaven,
 To hear in the end of doubts and
 doublings heaves
 My heart up as with sickness. Why,
 by this
 The heretic harlot that confounds our
 hope
 Should be made carrion, with those
 following four
 That were to wait upon her dead: all
 five
 Live yet to scourge God's servants, and
 we prate
 And threaten here in painting. By my
 life,
 I see no more in us of life or heart
 Than in this heartless picture.
Babington. Peace, again.
 Our purpose shall not long lack life,
 nor they
 Whose life is deadly to the heart of
 ours
 Much longer keep it: Burghley, Wal-
 singham,
 Hunsdon and Knowles, all these four
 names writ out,
 With hers at head they worship, are
 but now
 As those five several letters that spell
 death,
 In eyes that read them right. Give me
 but faith
 A little longer: trust that heart a
 while
 Which laid the ground of all our glo-
 ries; think
 I that was chosen of our queen's friends
 in France,
 By Morgan's hand there prisoner for
 her sake
 On charge of such a deed's device as
 ours
 Commended to her for truest, and a
 man

More sure than might be Ballard and
 more fit
 To bear the burden of her counsels, — I
 Can be not undeserving, whom she
 trusts,
 That ye should likewise trust me;
 seeing at first
 She writes me but a thankful word,
 and this,
 God wot, for little service; I return,
 For aptest answer and thankworthiest
 meed,
 Word of the usurper's plotted end, and
 she
 With such large heart of trust and
 liberal faith
 As here ye have heard requites me:
 whom, I think,
 For you to trust is no too great thing
 now
 For me to ask and have of all.

Tichborne. Dear friend,
 Mistrust has no part in our mind of you
 More than in hers; yet she too bids
 take heed,
 As I would bid you take, and let not
 slip
 The least of her good counsels, which
 to keep
 No whit proclaims us colder than her-
 self
 Who gives us charge to keep them,
 and to slight
 No whit proclaims us less unserviceable
 Who are found too hot to serve her,
 than the slave
 Who for cold heart and fear might fail.

Babington. Too hot!
 Why, what man's heart hath heat
 enough or blood
 To give for such good service? Look
 you, sirs,
 This is no new thing for my faith to
 keep,
 My soul to feed its fires with, and my
 hope
 Fix eyes upon for star to steer by: she
 That six years hence the boy that I was
 then,
 And page, ye know, to Shrewsbury,
 gave his faith
 To serve and worship with his body
 and soul

For only lady and queen, with power
 alone
 To lift my heart up and bow down
 mine eyes
 At sight and sense of her sweet sove-
 reignty,
 Made thence her man forever; she
 whose look
 Turned all my blood of life to tears
 and fire,
 That going or coming, sad or glad (for
 yet
 She would be sometime merry, as
 though to give
 Comfort, and ease at heart her servants,
 then
 Weep smilingly to be so light of mind,
 Saying she was like the bird grown
 blithe in bonds,
 That if too late set free would die for
 fear,
 Or wild birds hunt it out of life; if
 sad,
 Put madness in me for her suffering's
 sake,
 If joyous, for her very love's sake) still
 Made my heart mad alike to serve her,
 being
 I know not when the sweeter, sad or
 blithe,
 Nor what mood heavenliest of her, all
 whose change
 Was as of stars and sun and moon in
 heaven, —
 She is well content — ye have heard
 her — she, to die,
 If we without her may redeem our-
 selves,
 And loose our lives from bondage; but
 her friends
 Must take, forsooth, good heed they be
 not, no,
 Too hot of heart to serve her! And
 for me,
 Am I so vain a thing of wind and smoke
 That your deep counsel must have care
 to keep
 My lightness safe in wardship? I sought
 none, —
 Craved no man's counsel to draw plain
 my plot,
 Need no man's warning to dispose my
 deed.

Have I not laid of mine own hand a
 snare
 To bring no less a lusty bird to lure
 Than Walsingham with proffer of my-
 self
 For scout and spy on mine own friends
 in France
 To fill his wise wide ears with large
 report
 Of all things wrought there on our side,
 and plots
 Laid for our queen's sake? and for all
 his wit
 This politic knave misdoubts me not,
 whom ye
 Hold yet too light and lean of wit to
 pass
 Unspied of wise men on our enemies'
 part,
 Who have sealed the subtlest eyes up
 of them all.

Tichborne. That would I know; for
 if they be not blind,
 But only wink upon your proffer, seeing
 More than they let your own eyes find
 or fear,
 Why, there may lurk a fire to burn us all
 Masked in them with false blindness.

Babington. Hear you, sirs?
 Now, by the faith I had in this my friend,
 And by mine own yet flawless toward
 him, yea
 By all true love and trust that holds
 men fast,
 It shames me that I held him in this
 cause
 Half mine own heart, my better hand
 and eye,
 Mine other soul and worthier. Pray
 you, go:
 Let us not hold you; sir, be quit of us;
 Go home, lie safe, and give God thanks;
 lie close,
 Keep your head warm and covered.
 Nay, be wise;
 We are fit for no such wise folk's fel-
 lowship,
 No married man's who being bid forth
 to fight
 Holds his wife's kirtle fitter wear for
 man
 Than theirs who put on iron: I did
 know it,

Albeit I would not know; this man that
 was,
 This soul and sinew of a noble seed,
 Love and the lips that burn a bride-
 groom's through
 Have charmed to deathward, and in
 steel's good stead
 Left him a silken spirit.

Tichborne. By that faith
 Which yet I think you have found as
 fast in me
 As ever yours I found, you wrong me
 more
 Than, were I that your words can make
 me not,
 I had wronged myself and all our
 cause; I hold
 No whit less dear, for love's sake even,
 than love,
 Faith, honor, friendship, all that all my
 days
 Was only dear to my desire, till now
 This new thing, dear as all these only
 were,
 Made all these dearer. If my love be
 less
 Toward you, toward honor, or this
 cause, then think
 I love my wife not either, — whom you
 know
 How close at heart I cherish, — but in
 all
 Play false alike. Lead now which way
 you will,
 And wear what likeness: though to all
 men else
 It look not smooth, smooth shall it
 seem to me,
 And danger be not dangerous; where
 you go,
 For me shall wildest ways be safe, and
 straight
 For me the steepest; with your eyes
 and heart
 Will I take count of life and death,
 and think
 No thought against your counsel; yea,
 by heaven,
 I had rather follow and trust my friend,
 and die,
 Than halt and hark mistrustfully be-
 hind
 To live of him mistrusted.

Babington. Why, well said :
Strike hands upon it ; I think you shall
not find

A trustless pilot of me. Keep we fast,
And hold you fast my counsel, we shall
see

The state high-builed here of heretic
hope

Shaken to dust and death. Here comes
more proof

To warrant me no liar. — You are
welcome, sirs ;

Enter BALLARD, disguised, and SAVAGE.
Good father captain, come you plumed
or cowed,

Or stoled or sworded, here at any hand
The true heart bids you welcome.

Ballard. Sir, at none
Is folly welcome to mine ears or eyes.
Nay, stare not on me stormily : I say,
I bid at no hand welcome, by no name,
Be it ne'er so wise or valiant on men's
lips,

Pledge health to folly, nor forecast
good hope

For them that serve her, I, but take of
men

Things ill done ill at any hand alike.

Ye shall not say I cheered you to your
death,

Nor would, though naught more danger-
ous than your death,

Or deadlier for our cause and God's in
ours,

Were here to stand the chance of, and
your blood,

Shed vainly with no seed for faith to
sow,

Should be not poison for men's hopes
to drink.

What is this picture ? Have ye sense
or souls,

Eyes, ears, or wits to take assurance
in

Of how ye stand in strange men's eyes
and ears,

How fare upon their talking tongues,
how dwell

In shot of their suspicion, and sustain
How great a work how lightly ? Think
ye not

These men have ears and eyes about
your ways,

Walk with your feet, work with your
hands, and watch

When ye sleep sound and babble in
your sleep ?

What knave was he, or whose man
sworn and spy,

That drank with you last night ? whose
hireling lip

Was this that pledged you, Master
Babington,

To a foul quean's downfall and a fair
queen's rise ?

Can ye not seal your tongues from taver-
n speech,

Nor sup abroad but air may catch it
back,

Nor think who set that watch upon your
lips

Yourselves can keep not on them ?

Babington. What, my friends !
Here is one come to counsel, God be
thanked,

That bears commission to rebuke us
all.

Why, hark you, sir, you that speak
judgment, you

That take our doom upon your double
tongue

To sentence and accuse us with one
breath,

Our doomsman and our justicer for
sin,

Good Captain Ballard, Father Fortes-
cue,

Who made you guardian of us poor
men, gave

Your wisdom wardship of our follies,
chose

Your faith for keeper of our faiths, that
yet

Were never taxed of change or doubted ?
You,

'Tis you that have an eye to us, and
take note

What time we keep, what place, what
company,

How far may wisdom trust us to be
wise

Or faith esteem us faithful ; and your-
self

Were once the hireling hand and
tongue and eye

That waited on this very Walsingham

To spy men's counsels and betray their blood

Whose trust had sealed you trusty? By God's light,

A goodly guard I have of you, to crave

What man was he I drank with yesternight,

What name, what shape, what habit, as, forsooth,

Were I some statesman's knave and spotted spy,

The man I served, and care dnot how, being dead,

His molten gold should glut my throat in hell,

Might question of me whom I snared last night,

Make inquisition of his face, his gait, His speech, his likeness. Well, be answered, then:

By God, I know not; but God knows I think

The spy most dangerous on my secret walks,

And witness of my ways most worth my fear,

And deadliest listener to devour my speech,

Now questions me of danger, and the tongue

Most like to sting my trust and life to death

Now taxes mine of rashness.

Ballard. Is he mad?

Or are ye brain-sick all with heat of wine,

That stand and hear him rage like men in storms

Made drunk with danger? Have ye sworn with him

To die the fool's death too of furious fear

And passion scared to slaughter of itself?

Is there none here that knows his cause or me,

Nor what should save or spoil us?

Tichborne. Friend, give ear:

For God's sake, yet be counselled.

Babington. Ay, for God's!

What part hath God in this man's counsels? Nay,

Take you part with him; nay, in God's name go;

What should you do to bide with me! Turn back:

There stands your captain.

Savage. Hath not one man here One spark in spirit or sprinkling left of shame?

I that looked once for no such fellow ship,

But soldiers' hearts in shapes of gentlemen,

I am sick with shame to hear men's jangling tongues

Outnoise their swords unbloodied.

Hear me, sirs;

My hand keeps time before my tongue, and hath

But wit to speak in iron; yet as now Such wit were sharp enough to serve our turn

That keenest tongues may serve not. One thing sworn

Calls on our hearts: the queen must singly die,

Or we, half dead men now with daliying, must

Die several deaths for her brief one, and stretched

Beyond the scope of sufferance; wherefore here

Choose out the man to put this peril on, And gird him with this glory; let him pass

Straight hence to court, and through all stays of state

Strike death into her heart.

Babington. Why, this rings right; Well said, and soldierlike; do thus, and take

The vanguard of us all for honor.

Savage. Ay, Well would I go, but seeing no courtly suit

Like yours, her servants and her pensioners,

The doorkeepers will bid my baseness back

From passage to her presence.

Babington. Oh! for that, Take this, and buy: nay, start not from your word;

You shall not.

Savage. Sir, I shall not.

Babington. Here's more gold;
Make haste, and God go with you. If
the plot

Be blown on once of men's suspicious
breath,

We are dead, and all die bootless
deaths — be swift —

And her we have served we shall but
surely slay.

I will make trial again of Walsingham
If he misdoubt us. Oh! my cloak and
sword — [*Knocking within.*

I will go forth myself. What noise is
that?

Get you to Gage's lodging; stay not
here;

Make speed without for Westminster;
perchance

There may we safely shift our shapes
and fly,

If the end be come upon us.

Ballard. It is here.

Death knocks at door already. Fly!
farewell.

Babington. I would not leave you,
but they know you not:

You need not fear, being found here
singly.

Ballard. No.

Babington. Nay, halt not, sirs; no
word but haste; this way,

Ere they break down the doors. God
speed us well!

[*Exeunt all but BALLARD. As they go
out enter an Officer with Soldiers.*

Officer. Here's one fox yet by the
foot: lay hold on him.

Ballard. What would you, sirs?

Officer. Why, make one foul bird
fast,

Though the full flight be scattered; for
their kind

Must prey not here again, nor here
put on

The jay's loose feathers for the raven
priest's

To mock the blear-eyed marksman:
these plucked off

Shall show the nest that sent this
fledgling forth,

Hatched in the hottest holy nook of
hell.

Ballard. I am a soldier.

Officer. Ay, the badge we know
Whose broidery signs the shoulders of
the file

That Satan marks for Jesus. Bind him
fast:

Blue satin and slashed velvet and gold
lace,

Methinks we have you, and the hat's
band here

So seemly set with silver buttons, all
As here was down in order. By ray

faith,
A goodly ghostly friend to shrive a
maid

As ever kissed for penance. pity 'tis
The hangman's hands must hallow him
again

When this lay slough slips off, and
twist one rope

For priest to swing with soldier. Bring
him hence. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — CHARTLEY.

MARY STUART and MARY BEATON.

Mary Stuart. We shall not need
keep house for fear to-day:

The skies are fair and hot; the wind
sits well

For hound and horn to chime with. I
will go.

Mary Beaton. How far from this to
Tixall?

Mary Stuart. Nine or ten,
Or what miles more, I care not: we
shall find

Fair field and goodly quarry, or he
lies,

The gospeller that bade us to the sport
Protesting yesternight the shire had
none

To shame Sir Walter Aston's. God
be praised,

I take such pleasure yet to back my
steed

And bear my crossbow for a deer's
death well,

I am almost half content — and yet I
lie —

To ride no harder nor more dangerous
heat,

And hunt no beast of game less gallant

Mary Beaton. Nay,
You grew long since more patient.

Mary Stuart. Ah, God help!
What should I do but learn the word
of him

These years and years, the last word
learnt but one,

That ever I loved least of all sad
words?

The last is death for any soul to learn,
The last save death is patience.

Mary Beaton. Time enough
We have had ere death of life to learn
it in

Since you rode last on wilder ways
than theirs

That drive the dun deer to his death.

Mary Stuart. Eighteen —
How many more years yet shall God
mete out

For thee and me to wait upon their
will,

And hope or hope not, watch or sleep,
and dream

Awake or sleeping? Surely fewer, I
think,

Than half these years that all have
less of life

Than one of those more fleet that flew
before.

I am yet some ten years younger than
this queen,

Some nine or ten; but if I die this
year,

And she some score years longer than
I think

Be royal-titled, in one year of mine
I shall have lived the longer life, and
die

The fuller-fortuned woman. Dost thou
mind

The letter that I writ nigh two years
gone

To let her wit what privacies of hers
Our trusty dame of Shrewsbury's
tongue made mine

Ere it took fire to sting her lord and
me?

How thick soe'er o'erscurfed with poi-
sonous lies,

Of her I am sure it lied not; and per-
chance

I did the wiselier, having writ my fill,

Yet to withhold the letter when she
sought

Of me to know what villanies had it
poured

In ears of mine against her innocent
name:

And yet thou knowest what mirthful
heart was mine

To write her word of these, that, had
she read,

Had surely, being but woman, made
her mad,

Or haply, being not woman, had not
'Faith,

How say'st thou? did I well?

Mary Beaton. Ay, surely well
To keep that back you did not ill to
write.

Mary Stuart. I think so, and again
I think not; yet

The best I did was bid thee burn it
She,

That other Bess I mean of Hardwick,
hath

Mixed with her gall the fire at heart
of hell,

And all the mortal medicines of the
world,

To drug her speech with poison; and
God wot

Her daughter's child here that I bred
and loved,

Bess Pierpoint, my sweet bedfellow
that was,

Keeps too much savor of her grand-
am's stock

For me to match with Nau: my secre-
tary

Shall with no slip of hers ingraft his
own,

Begetting shame or peril to us all
From her false blood and fiery tongue.

Except

I find a mate as meet to match with
him

For truth to me as Gilbert Curle hath
found,

I will play Tudor once, and break the
banns,

Put on the feature of Elizabeth
To frown their hands in sunder.

Mary Beaton. Were it not
Some tyranny to take her likeness on

And bitter-hearted grudge of matrimony

For one and not his brother secretary,
 Forbid your Frenchman's banns for jealousy,

And grace your English with such liberal love

As Barbara fails not yet to find of you
 Since she writ Curle for Mowbray?
 And herein.

There shows no touch of Tudor in your mood

More than its wont is; which indeed is naught;

The world, they say, for her should waste, ere man

Should get her virginal goodwill to wed.

Mary Stuart. I would not be so tempered of my blood,

So much mismade as she in spirit and flesh,

To be more fair of fortune. She should hate

Not me — albeit she hate me deadly — more

Than thee or any woman. By my faith,

Fain would I know, what knowing not of her now

I muse upon and marvel, — if she have Desire or pulse or passion of true heart
 Fed full from natural veins, or be indeed

All bare and barren all as dead men's bones

Of all sweet nature and sharp seed of love,

And those salt springs of life, through fire and tears

That bring forth pain and pleasure in their kind

To make good days and evil, all in her
 Lie sere and sapless as the dust of death.

I have found no great good hap in all my days,

Nor much good cause to make me glad of God;

Yet have I had and lacked not of my life

My good things and mine evil, being not yet

Barred from life's natural ends of evil and good

Foredoomed for man and woman through the world

Till all their works be nothing; and of mine

I know but this — though I should die to-day,

I would not take for mine her fortune.

Mary Beaton. No?

Myself perchance I would not.

Mary Stuart. Dost thou think

That fire-tongued witch of Shrewsbury spake once truth,

Who told me all those quaint, foul, merry tales

Of our dear sister, that at her desire I writ to give her word of, and at thine

Withheld, and put the letter in thine hand

To burn, as was thy counsel? For my part,

How loud she lied soever in the charge
 That for adultery taxed me with her lord,

And, being disproved before the council here,

Brought on their knees to give themselves the lie

Her and her sons by that first lord of four

That took in turn this hell-mouthed hag to wife,

And got her kind upon her, — yet in this

I do believe she lied not more than I

Reporting her by record, how she said
 What infinite times had Leicester and his queen

Plucked all the fruitless fruit of baffled love

That being contracted privily they might;

With what large gust of fierce and foiled desire

This votaress crowned, whose vow could no man break,

Since God, whose hand shuts up the unkindly womb,

Had sealed it on her body, man by man

Would course her kindless lovers, and in quest

Pursue them hungering as a hound in
 heat,
 Full on the fiery scent and slot of lust,
 That men took shame and laughed and
 marvelled: one,
 Her chamberlain, so hot would she
 trace,
 And turn perforce from cover, that him-
 self,
 Being tracked at sight thus in the gen-
 eral eye,
 Was even constrained to play the pite-
 ous hare,
 And wind and double till her amorous
 chase
 Were blind with speed and breathless;
 but the worst
 Was this, that for this country's sake
 and shame's
 Our huntress Dian could not be content
 With Hatton, and another born her
 man
 And subject of this kingdom, but to
 heap
 The heavier scandal on her countrymen
 Had cast the wild growth of her lust
 away
 On one base-born, a stranger, whom of
 nights
 Within her woman's chamber would
 she seek
 To kiss and play for shame with
 secretly;
 And with the duke her bridegroom that
 should be, —
 That should and could not, seeing for-
 sooth no man
 Might make her wife or woman, — had
 she dealt
 As with this knave his follower; for by
 night
 She met him coming at her chamber
 door
 In her bare smock and night-rail, and
 thereon
 Bade him come in; who there abode
 three hours.
 But fools were they that thought to
 bind her will,
 And stay with one man, or allay the
 mood
 That ranging still gave tongue on sev-
 eral heats

To hunt fresh trails of lusty love. Ah
 this,
 Thou knowest, on record truly was set
 down,
 With much more villanous else: she
 prayed me write
 That she might know the natural spirit
 and mind
 Toward her of this fell witch whose
 rancorous mouth
 Then bayed my name, as now being
 great with child
 By her fourth husband, in whose charge
 I lay
 As here in Paulet's; so being moved I
 wrote,
 And yet I would she had read it, though
 not now
 Would I re-write each word again,
 albeit
 I might, or thou, were I so minded, or
 Thyself so moved to bear such witness.
 But
 'Tis well we know not how she had
 borne to read
 All this and more; what counsel gave
 the dame,
 With loud excess of laughter urging
 me
 To enter on those lists of love-making
 My son for suitor to her, who thereby
 Might greatly serve and stead me in
 her sight;
 And, I replying that such a thing could
 be
 But held a very mockery, she returns,
 The queen was so infatuate and dis-
 traught
 With high conceit of her fair fretted
 face
 As of a heavenly goddess, that her
 self
 Would take it on her head with no
 great pains
 To bring her to believe it easily;
 Being so past reason fain of flattering
 tongues,
 She thought they mocked her not nor
 lied who said
 They might not sometimes look her full
 in face
 Nor the light glittering from it as the
 sun;

And so perforce must all her women
say,

And she herself that spake, who durst
not look

For fear to laugh out each in other's
face

Even while they fooled, and fed her
vein with words,

Nor let their eyes cross when they
spake to her,

And set their feature fast in a frame
To keep grave countenance with gross
mockery lined;

And how she prayed me chide her
daughter, whom

She might by no means move to take
this way,

And for her daughter Talbot was
assured

She could not ever choose but laugh
outright

Even in the good queen's flattered face.
God wot,

Had she read all, and in my hand set
down,

I could not blame her though she had
sought to take

My head for payment: no less poise on
earth

Had served, and hardly, for the writer's
fee;

I could not much have blamed her; all
the less,

That I did take this, though from slan-
derous lips,

For gospel and not slander, and that
now

I yet do well believe it.

Mary Beaton. And herself
Had well believed so much, and surely
seen, —

For all your protest of discredit made
With God to witness that you could
not take

Such tales for truth of her, nor would
not, — yet

You meant not she should take your
word for this,

As well I think she would not.

Mary Stuart. Haply, no.

We do protest not thus to be believed.
And yet the witch in one thing seven
years since

Belied her, saying she then must needs
die soon

For timeless fault of nature. Now
belike

The soothsaying that speaks short her
span to be

May prove more true of presage.

Mary Beaton. Have you hope
The chase to-day may serve our further
ends

Than to renew your spirit, and bid
time speed?

Mary Stuart. I see not, but I may:
the hour is full

Which I was bidden expect of them to
bear

More fruit than grows of promise.
Babington

Should tarry now not long; from
France our friends

Lift up their heads to us-ward, and
await

What comfort may confirm them from
our part

Who sent us comfort; Ballard's secret
tongue

Has kindled England, striking from
men's hearts

As from a flint the fire that slept, and
made

Their dark dumb thoughts and dim
disfigured hopes

Take form from his and feature, aim
and strength,

Speech and desire toward action; all
the shires

Wherein the force lies hidden of our
faith

Are stirred and set on edge of present
deed

And hope more imminent now of help
to come

And work to do than ever; not this
time

We hang on trust in succor that comes
short

By Philip's fault from Austrian John,
whose death

Put widow's weeds on mine unwedded
hope,

Late trothplight to his enterprise in vain
That was to set me free, but might not
seal

The faith it pledged, nor on the hand
 of hope
 Make fast the ring that weds desire
 with deed
 And promise with performance; Parma
 stands
 More fast now for us in his uncle's
 stead,
 Albeit the lesser warrior, yet in place
 More like to avail us, and in happier
 time
 To do like service; for my cousin of
 Guise,
 His hand and league hold fast our
 kinsman king,
 If not to bend and shape him for our
 use,
 Yet so to govern as he may not thwart
 Our forward undertaking till its force
 Discharge itself on England: from no
 side
 I see the shade of any fear to fail
 As those before so baffled; heart and
 hand
 Our hope is armed with trust more
 strong than steel,
 And spirit to strike more helpful than
 a sword
 In hands that lack the spirit; and here
 to-day
 It may be I shall look this hope in the
 eyes,
 And see her face transfigured. God is
 good:
 He will not fail his faith forever. Oh
 That I were now in saddle! Yet an
 hour,
 And I shall be as young again as
 May
 Whose life was come to August; like
 this year,
 I had grown past midway of my life,
 and sat
 Heartsick of summer; but new-mounted
 now
 I shall ride right through shine and
 shade of spring
 With heart and habit of a bride, and
 bear
 A brow more bright than fortune.
 Truth it is,
 These words of bride and May should
 on my tongue

Sound now not merry, ring no joy-bells
 out
 In ears of hope or memory; not for
 me
 Have they been joyous words; but this
 fair day
 All sounds that ring delight in fortu-
 nate ears,
 And words that make men thankful
 even to me
 Seem thankworthy for joy they have
 given me not
 And hope which now they should not.
Mary Beaton. Nay, who knows?
 The less they have given of joy, the
 more they may;
 And they who have had their happiness
 before
 Have hope not in the future; time o'er-
 past
 And time to be have several ends, nor
 wear
 One forward face and backward.
Mary Stuart. God, I pray,
 Turn thy good words to gospel, and
 make truth
 Of their kind presage! but our Scots-
 women
 Would say, to be so joyous as I am,
 Though I had cause, as surely cause I
 have,
 Were no good warrant of good hope
 for me.
 I never took such comfort of my trust
 In Norfolk or Northumberland, nor
 looked
 For such good end as now of all my
 fears
 From all devices past of policy
 To join my name with my misnaturaed
 son's
 In handfast pledge with England's, ere
 my foes
 His counsellors had flawed his craven
 faith,
 And moved my natural blood to cast
 me off
 Who bore him in my body, to come
 forth
 Less childlike than a changeling. But
 not long
 Shal' they find means by him to work
 their will,

Nor he bear head against me; hope
was his

To reign forsooth without my fellow-
ship,

And he that with me would not shall
not now

Without or with me wield not or divide
Or part or all of empire.

Mary Beaton. Dear my queen,
Vex not your mood with sudden change
of thoughts;

Your mind but now was merrier than
the sun

Half rid by this through morning: we
by noon

Should blithely mount and meet him.

Mary Stuart. So I said.

My spirit is fallen again from that glad
strength

Which even but now arrayed it; yet
what cause

Should dull the dancing measure in my
blood

For doubt or wrath, I know not. Being
once forth,

My heart again will quicken.

[Sings.

And ye maun braid your yellow hair,

And busk ye like a bride;

Wi' sevencore men to bring ye hame,

And ae true love beside;

Between the birk and the green rowan

Fu' blithely shall ye ride.

O ye maun braid my yellow hair,

But braid it like nae bride:

And I maun gang my ways, mither,

Wi' nae true love beside;

Between the kirk and the kirkyard

Fu' sadly shall I ride.

How long since,

How long since was it last I heard or
sang

Such light lost ends of old faint rhyme
worn thin

With use of country songsters? When
we twain

Were maidens but some twice a span's
length high,

Thou hadst the happier memory to hold
rhyme,

But not for song, the merrier.

Mary Beaton. This was one
That I would sing after my nurse, I
think,

And weep upon in France at six years
old

To think of Scotland.

Mary Stuart. Would I weep for
that,

Woman or child, I have had now years
enough

To weep in; thou wast never French
in heart,

Serving the queen of France. Poor
queen that was,

Poor boy that played her bridegroom I
now they seem

In these mine eyes that were her eyes
as far

Beyond the reach and range of old-
world time

As their first fathers' graves.

Enter SIR AMYAS PAULET.

Paulet. Madam, if now
It please you to set forth, the hour is
full,

And there your horses ready.

Mary Stuart. Sir, my thanks.

We are bounden to you and this goodly
day

For no small comfort. Is it your will
we ride

Accompanied with any for the nonce
Of our own household?

Paulet. If you will, to-day

Your secretaries have leave to ride with
you.

Mary Stuart. We keep some state,
then, yet. I pray you, sir,

Doth he wait on you that came here
last month,—

A low-built, lank-checked, Judas-
bearded man,

Lean, supple, grave, pock-pitted, yellow-
polled,

A smiling fellow with a downcast eye?

Paulet. Madam, I know the man for
none of mine.

Mary Stuart. I give you joy as you
should give God thanks,

Sir, if I err not; but meseemed this
man

Found gracious entertainment here, and
took

Such counsel with you as I surely
thought

Spake him your friend, and honorable.

But now,

If I misread not an ambiguous word,
It seems you know no more of him or
less

Than Peter did, being questioned, of
his Lord.

Paulet. I know not where the cause
were to be sought

That might for likeness or unlikeness
found

Make seemly way for such compari-
son

As turns such names to jest and bitter-
ness:

Howbeit, as I denied not nor disclaimed
To know the man you speak of, yet I
may

With very purity of truth profess
The man to be not of my following.

Mary Stuart. See

How lightly may the tongue that thinks
no ill

Or trip or slip, discoursing that or
this

With grave good men in purity and
truth,

And come to shame even with a word!
God wot,

We had need put bit and bridle in our
lips

Ere they take on them of their foolish-
ness

To change wise words with wisdom. —
Come, sweet friend,

Let us go seek our kind with horse and
hound

To keep us witless company; belike,
There shall we find our fellows.

[*Exeunt* MARY STUART and MARY
BEATON.

Paulet. Would to God

This day had done its office! mine till
then

Holds me the verier prisoner.

Enter PHILLIPPS.

Phillipps. She will go?

Paulet. Gladly, poor sinful fool, —
more gladly, sir,

Than I go with her.

Phillipps. Yet you go not far:

She is come too near her end of way
faring

To tire much more men's feet that
follow.

Paulet. Ay.

She walks but half blind yet to the end.

Even now

She spake of you, and questioned
doubtfully

What here you came to do, or held what
place

Or commerce with me: when you
caught her eye,

It seems your courtesy by some grace-
less chance

Found but scant grace with her.

Phillipps. 'Tis mine own blame,

Or fault of mine own feature; yet for-
sooth

I greatly covet not their gracious hap

Who have found or find most grace
with her. I pray,

Doth Wade go with you?

Paulet. Nay, — what! know you
not? —

But with Sir Thomas Gorges, from the
court,

To drive this deer at Tixall.

Phillipps. Two years since,

He went, I think, commissioned from
the queen

To treat with her at Sheffield?

Paulet. Ay, and since

She hath not seen him; who being
known of here

Had haply given her swift suspicion
edge,

Or cause at least of wonder.

Phillipps. And I doubt

His last year's entertainment oversea

As our queen's envoy to demand of
France

Her traitor Morgan's body, whence he
brought

Naught save dry blows back from the
Duke d'Aumale,

And for that prisoner's quarters here
to hang

His own not whole but beaten, should
not much

Incline him to more good regard of her
For whose love's sake her friends have

dealt with him

So honorably; nor she that knows of
this

Be the less like to take his presence
here

For no good presage to her: you have
both done well

To keep his hand as close herein as
mine.

Paulet. Sir, by my faith I know not,
for myself,

What part is for mine honor, or where-
in

Of all this action laid upon mine hand
The name and witness of a gentleman
May gain desert or credit, and increase
In seed and harvest of good men's
esteem

For heritage to his heirs, that men
unborn

Whose fame is as their name derived
from his

May reap in reputation; and indeed
I look for none advancement in the
world

Further than this that yet for no man's
sa'ke

Would I forego, to keep the name I
have

And honor, which no son of mine shall
say

I have left him not for any deed of mine
As perfect as my sire bequeathed it me:

I say, for any word or work yet past
No tongue can thus far tax me of de-
cline

From that fair forthright way of gentle-
man,

Nor shall for any that I think to do
Or ought I think to say alive: howbeit,

I were much bounden to the man would
say

But so much for me in our mistress' ear,
The treasurer's, or your master Walsing-
ham's,

Whose office here I have undergone
thus long,

And had I leave more gladly would
put off

Than ever I put on me; being not one
That out of love toward England even
or God

At mightiest men's desire would lightly
be

For loyalty disloyal, or approved
In trustless works a trusty traitor; this
He that should tell them of me, to pro-
cure

The speedier end here of this work
imposed,

Should bind me to him more heartily
than thanks

Might answer.

Phillips. Good Sir Amyas, you and I
Hold no such office in this dangerous
time

As men make love to for their own
name's sake

Or personal lust of honor; but herein
I pray you yet take note, and pardon
me

If I for the instance mix your name with
mine,

That no man's private honor lies at
gauge,

Nor is the stake set here to play for
less

Than what is more than all men's
names alive, —

The great life's gage of England; in
whose name

Lie all our own implicated, as all our
lives

For her redemption forfeit, if the cause
Call once upon us. Not this gift or
this,

Or what best likes us, or were gladliest
given,

Or might most honorably be parted
with

For our more credit on her best be-
half,

Doth she we serve, this land that made
us men,

Require of all her children; but
demands

Of our great duty toward her full deserts,
Even all we have of honor or of life,

Of breath or fame, to give her What
were I,

Or what were you, being mean or nobly
born,

Yet moulded both of one land's natural
womb

And fashioned out of England, to deny
What gift she crave soever, choose and
grudge

What grace we list to give or what
 withhold,
 Refuse and reckon with her when she
 bids
 Yield up, forsooth, not life but fame to
 come,
 A good man's praise or gentleman's
 repute,
 Or lineal pride of children, and the
 light
 Of loyalty remembered? which of these
 Were worth our mother's death, or
 shame that might
 Fall for one hour on England? She
 must live,
 And keep in all men's sight her honor
 fast,
 Though all we die dishonored; and
 myself
 Know not nor seek of men's report to
 know
 If what I do to serve her till I die
 Be honorable or shameful, and its end
 Good in men's eyes or evil; but for
 God,
 I find not why the name or fear of
 him
 Herein should make me swerve or
 start aside
 Through faint heart's falsehood, as a
 broken bow
 Snapped in his hand that bent it, ere
 the shaft
 Find out his enemies' heart, and I that
 end
 Whereto I am sped for service even of
 him
 Who put this office on us.
Paulet. Truly, sir,
 I lack the wordy wit to match with
 yours,
 Who speak no more than soldier; this
 I know, —
 I am sick in spirit and heart to have in
 hand
 Such work or such device of yours as
 yet
 For fear and conscience of what worst
 may come
 I dare not well bear through.
Phillips. Why, so last month
 You writ my master word, and me to
 boot.

I had set you down a course for many
 things
 You durst not put in execution, nor
 Consign the packet to this lady's hand
 That was returned from mine, seeing all
 was well,
 And you should hold yourself most
 wretched man
 If by your mean or order there should
 spring
 Suspicion 'twixt the several messengers
 Whose hands unwitting each of other
 ply
 The same close trade for the same
 golden end,
 While either holds his mate a faithful
 fool,
 And all their souls, base-born or gently
 bred,
 Are coined and stamped and minted
 for our use
 And current in our service: I thereon,
 To assuage your doubt and fortify your
 fear,
 Was posted hither, where by craft and
 pains
 The web is wound up of our enter-
 prise,
 And in our hands we hold her very
 heart
 As fast as all this while we held im-
 pawned
 The faith of Barnes that stood for Gif-
 ford here
 To take what letters for his mistress
 came
 From southward through the ambassa-
 dor of France,
 And bear them to the brewer, your hon-
 est man,
 Who wist no further of his fellowship
 Than he of Gifford's, being as simple
 knaves
 As knavish each in his simplicity,
 And either serviceable alike, to shift
 Between my master's hands and yours
 and mine
 Her letters writ and answered to and
 fro;
 And all these faiths as weather-tight
 and safe
 As was the box that held those letters
 close

At bottom of the barrel, to give up
The charge there sealed and ciphered,
and receive

A charge as great in peril and in price
To yield again, when they drew off the
beer

That weekly served this lady's house-
hold whom

We have drained as dry of secrets
drugged with death

As ever they this vessel, and return
To her own lips the dregs she brewed
or we

For her to drink have tempered. What
of this

Should seem so strange now to you, or
distaste

So much the daintier palate of your
thoughts,

That I should need reiterate you by
word

The work of us o'erpast, or fill your
ear

With long foregone recital, that at last
Your soul may start not, or your sense
recoil,

To know what end we are come to, or
what hope

We took in hand to cut this peril off
By what close mean soe'er and what
foul hands

Unwashed of treason, which it yet mis-
likes

Your knightly palm to touch or close
with, seeing

The grime of gold is baser than of
blood

That barks their filthy fingers? yet
with these

Must you cross hands and grapple, or
let fall

The trust you took to treasure.

Paulet. Sir, I will,
Even till the queen take back that gave
it; yet

Will not join hands with these, nor
take on mine

The taint of their contagion; knowing
no cause

That should confound or couple my
good name

With theirs more hateful than the reek
of hell.

You had these knaveries and these
knaves in charge,

Not I that knew not how to handle
them,

Nor whom to choose for chief of trea-
sons, him

That in mine ignorant eye, unused to
read

The shameful scripture of such faces,
bare

Graved on his smooth and simple
cheek and brow

No token of a traitor; yet this boy,
This milk-mouthed weanling with his
maiden chin,

This soft-lipped knave, late suckled as
on blood

And nursed of poisonous nipples, have
you not

Found false or feared by this, whom
first you found

A trustier thief and worthier of his
wage

Than I, poor man, had wit to find
him? I,

That trust no changelings of the church
of hell,

No babes reared priestlike at the paps
of Rome,

Who have left the old harlot's deadly
dugs drawn dry,

I lacked the craft to rate this knave of
price,

Your smock-faced Gifford, at his worth
aright,

Which now comes short of promise.

Phillips. Oh, not he!

Let not your knighthood for a slippery
word

So much misdoubt his knaveship: here
from France,

On hint of our suspicion in his ear
Half-jestingly recorded, that his hand

Were set against us in one politic track
With his old yokefellows in craft and
creed,

Betraying not them to us but ourselves
to them,

My Gilbert writes me with such heat
of hand,

Such piteous protestation of his faith,
So stuffed and swoln with burly-bellied
oaths, —

And God and Christ confound him if
 he lie,
 And Jesus save him as he speaks mere
 truth, —
 My gracious godly priestling, that your-
 self
 Must sure be moved to take his truth
 on trust,
 Or stand for him approved an atheist.
Paulet. Well,
 That you find stuff of laughter in such
 gear,
 And mirth to make out of the godless
 mouth
 Of such a twice-turned villain, for my
 part,
 I take in token of your certain trust,
 And make therewith mine own assur-
 ance sure,
 To see betimes an end of all such
 craft
 As takes the faith forsworn of loud-
 tongued liars,
 And blasphemies of brothel-breathing
 knaves,
 To build its hope or break its jest
 upon;
 And so commend you to your charge,
 and take
 Mine own on me less gladly; for by
 this
 She should be girt to ride, as the old
 saw saith,
 Out of God's blessing into the warm
 sun,
 And out of the warm sun into the pit
 That men have dug before her, as her-
 self
 Had dug for England else a deeper
 grave
 To hide our hope forever: yet I would
 This day and all that hang on it were
 done.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — BEFORE TIXALL PARK.

MARY STUART, MARY BEATON, PAU-
 LET, CURLE, NAU, and Attendants.

Mary Stuart. If I should nevermore
 back steed alive,
 But now had ridden hither this fair day
 The last road ever I must ride on
 earth,

Yet would I praise it, saying of all
 days gone
 And all roads ridden in sight of stars
 and sun
 Since first I sprang to saddle, here at
 last
 I had found no joyless end. These
 ways are smooth,
 And all this land's face merry; yet I
 find
 The ways even therefore not so good
 to ride,
 And all the land's face therefore less
 worth love,
 Being smoother for a palfrey's maiden
 pace
 And merrier than our moors for out-
 look: nay,
 I lie to say so; there the wind and sun
 Make madder mirth by midsummer,
 and fill
 With broader breadth and lustier
 length of light
 The heartier hours that clothe for even
 and dawn
 Our bosom-belted billowy-blossoming
 hills
 Whose hearts break out in laughter
 like the sea
 For miles of heaving heather. Ye
 should mock
 My banished praise of Scotland; and
 in faith
 I praised it but to prick you on to
 praise
 Of your own goodly land; though field
 and wood
 Be parked and parcelled to the sky's
 edge out,
 And this green Stafford moorland
 smooth and strait
 That we but now rode over, and by
 ours
 Look pale for lack of large live moun-
 tain bloom
 Wind-buffed with morning, it should
 be
 Worth praise of men whose lineal
 honor lives
 In keeping here of history. But me
 seems
 I have heard, Sir Amyas, of your lib-
 eral west

As of a land more affluent-souled than
 this,
 And fruitful-hearted as the south-wind:
 here
 I find a fair-faced change of temperate
 clime
 From that bald hill-brow in a broad
 bare plain
 Where winter laid us both his prison-
 ers late
 Fast by the feet at Tutbury; but men
 say
 Your birthright in this land is fallen
 more fair
 In goodlier ground of heritage: per-
 chance,
 Grief to be now barred thence by mean
 of me,
 Who less than you can help it or my-
 self,
 Makes you ride sad and sullen.

Paulët. Madam, no:

I pray you lay not to my wilful charge
 The blame or burden of discourtesy
 That but the time should bear which
 lays on me
 This weight of thoughts untimely.

Mary Stuart. Nay, fair sir,

If I, that have no cause in life to seem
 Glad of my sad life more than prison-
 ers may,
 Take comfort yet of sunshine, he me-
 thinks
 That holds in ward my days and nights
 might well
 Take no less pleasure of this broad
 blithe air
 Than his poor charge that too much
 troubles him.
 What! are we nigh the chase?

Paulët. Even hard at hand.

Mary Stuart. Can I not see between
 the glittering leaves

Gleam the dun hides and flash the
 startled horns

That we must charge and scatter?
 Were I queen,

And had a crown to wager on my hand,
 Sir, I would set it on the chance to-
 day

To shoot a flight beyond you.

Paulët. Verily,

The hazard were too heavy for my skill:

I would not hold your wager.

Mary Stuart. Nol and why?

Paulët. For fear to come a bowshot
 short of you

On the left hand, unluckily.

Mary Stuart. My friend,

Our keeper's wit-shaft is too keen for
 ours

To match its edge with pointless iron.
 Sir,

Your tongue shoots farther than my
 hand or eye

With sense or aim can follow.—Gil-
 bert Curle,

Your heart yet halts behind this cry
 of hounds,

Hunting your own deer's trail at home,
 who lies

Now close in covert till her bearing-
 time

Be full to bring forth kindly fruit of
 kind

To love that yet lacks issue; and in
 sooth

I blame you not to bid all sport go by
 For one white doe's sake travailing,
 who myself

Think long till I may take within mine
 arm

The soft fawn suckling that is yeaned
 not yet,

But is to make her mother. We must
 hold

A goodly christening feast with prison-
 er's cheer

And mirth enow for such a tender thing
 As will not weep more to be born in
 bonds

Than babes born out of gaoler's ward,
 nor grudge

To find no friend more fortunate than I
 Nor happier hand to welcome it, nor
 name

More prosperous than poor mine to
 weai, if God

Shall send the new-made mother's
 breast, for love

Of us that love his mother's maiden-
 hood,

A maid to be my name-child, and in
 all

Save love to them that love her, by
 God's grace,

Most unlike me; for whose unborn
sweet sake

Pray you meantime be merry. — 'Faith,
methinks

Here be more huntsmen out afield to-
day,

And merrier than my guardian. Sir,
look up:

What think you of these riders? — All
my friends,

Make on to meet them.

Paulet. There shall need no haste:
They ride not slack or lamely.

Mary Stuart. Now, fair sir,
What say you to my chance on wager?
Here

I think to outshoot your archery. — By
my life,

That too must fail if hope now fail me;
these

That ride so far off yet, being come,
shall bring

Death or deliverance. Prithee, speak
but once;

[*Aside to MARY BEATON.*
Say, these are they we looked for; say,
thou too

Hadst hope to meet them; say, they
should be here,

And I did well to look for them; O
God!

Say but I was not mad to hope; see
there;

Speak, or I die.

Mary Beaton. Nay, not before they
come.

Mary Stuart. Dost thou not hear my
heart? It speaks so loud,

I can hear nothing of them. Yet I
will not

Fail in mine enemy's sight. This is
mine hour

That was to be for triumph; God, I pray,
Stretch not its length out longer!

Mary Beaton. It is past.

*Enter SIR THOMAS GORGES, SIR WIL-
LIAM WADE, and Soldiers.*

Mary Stuart. What man is this that
stands across our way?

Gorges. One that hath warrant, mad-
am, from the queen

To arrest your French and English
secretary,

And for more surety see yourself re-
moved

To present ward at Tixall here hard by,
As in this paper stands of her sub-
scribed. —

Lay hands on them.

Mary Stuart. Was this your riddle's
word? [To PAULET.

You have shot beyond me indeed, and
shot to death

Your honor with my life. — Draw, sirs,
and stand:

Ye have swords yet left to strike with
once, and die

By these our foes are girt with. Some
good friend, —

I should have one yet left of you, —
take heart,

And slay me here. For God's love,
draw: they have not

So large a vantage of us, we must needs
Bear back one foot from peril. Give

not way:
Ye shall but die more shamefully than

here,
Who can but here die fighting. What!

no man?
Must I find never at my need alive

A man with heart to help me? O my
God,

Let me die now, and foil them! —
Paulet, you,

Most knightly liar and traitor, was not
this

Part of your charge, to play my hang-
man too,

Who have played so well my dooms-
man, and betrayed

So honorably my trust, so bravely set
A snare so loyal to make sure for death

So poor a foolish woman? Sir, or you
That have this gallant office, great as

his,
To do the deadliest errand and most

vile
That even your mistress ever laid on

man,
And sent her basest knave to bear and

slay,
You are likewise of her chivalry, and

should not
Shrink to fulfil your title; being a

knight,

For her dear sake that made you, lose
 not heart
 To strike for her one worthy stroke,
 that may
 Rid me defenceless of the loathed long
 life
 She gapes for like a bloodhound. Nay,
 I find
 A face beside you that should bear for
 me
 Not life inscribed upon it; two years
 since
 I read therein at Sheffield what good will
 She bare toward me that sent to treat
 withal
 So mean a man and shameless, by his
 tongue
 To smite mine honor on the face, and
 turn
 My name of queen to servant; by his
 hand
 So let her turn my life's name now to
 death,
 Which I would take more thankfully
 than shame
 To plead and thus prevail not.
Paulet. Madam, no:
 With us you may not in such suit pre-
 vail,
 Nor we by words or wrath of yours be
 moved
 To turn their edge back on you, nor
 remit
 The least part of our office, which
 deserves
 Nor scorn of you nor wonder, whose
 own act
 Has laid it on us; wherefore with less
 rage
 Please you take thought now to submit
 yourself,
 Even for your own more honor, to the
 effect
 Whose cause was of your own device,
 that here
 Bears fruit unlooked for; which being
 ripe in time
 You cannot choose but taste of, nor
 may we
 But do the season's bidding, and the
 queen's
 Who weeps at heart to know it. — Dis-
 arm these men.

Take you the prisoners to your present
 ward,
 And hence again to London: here
 meanwhile
 Some week or twain their lady must
 lie close,
 And with a patient or impatient heart
 Expect an end and word of judgment: I
 Must with Sir William back to Chart-
 ley straight,
 And there make inquisition ere day
 close
 What secret serpents of what treasons
 hatched
 May in this lady's papers lurk, whence
 we
 Must pluck the fangs forth of them yet
 unfleshed,
 And lay these plots like dead and
 strangled snakes
 Naked before the council.
Mary Stuart. I must go?
Gorges. Madam, no help: I pray your
 pardon.
Mary Stuart. Ay?
 Had I your pardon in this hand to give,
 And here in this my vengeance —
 Words, and words!
 God, for thy pity! what vile thing is this
 That thou didst make of woman? even
 in death,
 As in the extremest evil of all our
 lives,
 We can but curse or pray, but prate and
 weep,
 And all our wrath is wind that works
 no wreck,
 And all our fire as water. — Noble sirs,
 We are servants of your servants, and
 obey
 The beck of your least groom; obsequi-
 ously,
 We pray you but report of us so much,
 Submit us to you. Yet would I take
 farewell,
 May it not displease you, for old ser-
 vice' sake,
 Of one my servant here that was, and
 now
 Hath no word for me; yet I blame him
 not,
 Who am past all help of man. — God
 witness me,

I would not chide now, Gilbert, though
 my tongue
 Had strength yet left for chiding, and
 its edge
 Were yet a sword to smite with, or my
 wrath
 A thing that babes might shrink at;
 only this
 Take with you for your poor queen's
 true last word, —
 That if they let me live so long to see
 The fair wife's face again from whose
 soft side,
 Now laboring with your child, by violent
 hands
 You are reft perforce for my sake, while
 I live
 I will have charge of her more carefully
 Than of mine own life's keeping, which
 indeed
 I think not long to keep, nor care, God
 knows,
 How soon or how men take it. Nay,
 good friend,
 Weep not : my weeping time is well-
 nigh past,
 And theirs whose eyes have too much
 wept for me
 Should last no longer. — Sirs, I give you
 thanks
 For thus much grace and patience shown
 of you,
 My gentle gaolers, towards a queen
 unqueened,
 Who shall nor get nor crave again of
 man
 What grace may rest in him to give her.
 Come,
 Bring me to bonds again, and her with
 me
 That hath not stood so nigh me all
 these years
 To fall ere life doth from my side, or
 take
 Her way to death without me till I die.

ACT II. — WALSINGHAM.

SCENE I. — WINDSOR CASTLE.

QUEEN ELIZABETH and SIR FRANCIS
 WALSINGHAM.

Elizabeth. What will ye make me?
 Let the council know

I am yet their loving mistress, but they
 lay
 Too strange a burden on my love who
 send
 As to their servant word what ways to
 take,
 What sentence of my subjects given
 subscribe,
 And in mine own name utter. Bid
 them wait:
 Have I not patience? and was never
 quick
 To teach my tongue the deadly word of
 death,
 Lest one day strange tongues blot my
 fame with blood:
 The red addition of my sister's name
 Shall brand not mine.
Walsingham. God grant your mercy
 shown
 Mark not your memory like a martyr's
 red
 With pure imperial heart's-blood of
 your own
 Shed through your own sweet-spirited
 height of heart
 That held your hand from justice!
Elizabeth. I would rather
 Stand in God's sight so signed with
 mine own blood
 Than with a sister's — innocent; or
 indeed
 Though guilty — being a sister's —
 might I choose,
 As being a queen I may not surely, —
 no —
 I may not choose, you tell me.
Walsingham. Nay, no man
 Hath license of so large election given
 As once to choose, being servant called
 of God,
 If he will serve or no, or save the
 name
 And slack the service.
Elizabeth. Yea, but in his Word
 I find no word that whets for king-
 killing
 The sword kings bear for justice: yet
 I doubt,
 Being drawn, it may not choose but
 strike at root —
 Being drawn to cut off treason. *Wal-*
singham,

You are more a statesman then a gos-
peller;

Take for your tongue's text now no text
of God's,

But what the Devil has put into their
lips

Who should have slain me; nay, what
by God's grace,

Who bared their purpose to us, through
pain or fear

hath been wrung thence of secrets writ
in fire

At bottom of their hearts. Have they
confessed?

Walsingham. The twain trapped first
in London.

Elizabeth. What, the priest?

Their twice-turned Ballard, ha?

Walsingham. Madam, not he.

Elizabeth. God's blood! ye have
spared not him the torment,
knaves?

Of all I would not spare him.

Walsingham. Verily, no;

The rack hath spun his life's thread out
so fine

There is but left for death to slit in
twain

The thickness of a spider's.

Elizabeth. Ay, still dumb?

Walsingham. Dumb for all good the
pains can get of him;

Had he drunk dry the chalice of his craft
Brewed in design abhorred of even his
friends

With poisonous purpose toward your
majesty,

He had kept scarce harder silence.

Elizabeth. Poison? ay—

That should be still the churchman's
household sword,

Or saintly staff to bruise crowned heads
from far,

And break them with his precious
balms that smell

Rank as the jaws of death, or festal
fume

When Rome yet reeked with Borgia.

But the rest

Had grace enow to grant me for good-
will

Some death more gracious than a rat's?
God wot,

I am bounden to them, and will charge
for this

The hangman thank them heartily; they
shall not

Lack daylight means to die by. God
meseems,

Will have me not die darkling like a
dog,

Who hath kept my lips from poison,
and my heart

From shot of English knave or Spanish,
both

Dubbed of the Devil or damned his
doctors, whom

My riddance from all ills that plague
man's life

Should have made great in record; and
for wage

Your Ballard hath not better hap to fee
Than Lopez had or Parry. Well, he
lies

As dumb in bonds as those dead dogs
in earth,

You say; but of his fellows newly ta'en
There are that keep not silence: what
say these?

Pour in mine ears the poison of their
plot

Whose fangs have stung the silly
snakes to death.

Walsingham. The first a soldier,
Savage, in these wars

That sometimes serving sought a trai-
tor's luck

Under the prince Farnese, then of late
At Rheims was tempted of our traitors
there,

Of one in chief, Gifford the seminarist,
My smock-faced spy's good uncle, to
take off

Or the earl of Leicester or your gra-
cious self;

And since his passage hither, to con-
firm

His hollow-hearted hardihood, hath
had

Word from this doctor more solicitous
yet

Sent by my knave his nephew, who of
late

Was in the seminary of so deadly seed
Their reader in philosophy, that their
head,

Even Cardinal Allen, holds for just and
good
The purpose laid upon his hand; this
man
Makes yet more large confession than
of this,
Saying from our Gilbert's trusty mouth
he had

Assurance that in Italy the Pope
Hath levies raised against us, to set
forth

For seeming succor toward the Par-
mesan,

But in their actual aim bent hither,
where

With French and Spaniards in one
front of war

They might make in upon us; but from
France

No foot shall pass for inroad on our
peace

Till—so they phrase it—by these
Catholics here

Your majesty be taken, or —

Elizabeth. No more —

But only taken? springed but bird-like?
Ha!

They are something tender of our poor
personal chance —

Temperately tender: yet I doubt the
springe

Had haply maimed me no less deep
than life

Sits next the heart most mortal. Or
—so be it

I slip the springe—what yet may
shackle France,

Hang weights upon their purpose who
should else

Be great of heart against us? They
take time

Till I be taken—or till what signal else
As favorable?

Walsingham. Till she they serve be
brought

Safe out of Paulet's keeping.

Elizabeth. Ay? they know him

So much my servant, and his guard so
good,

That sound of strange feet marching
on our soil

Against us in his prisoner's name per-
chance

Might from the walls wherein she sits
his guest

Raise a funereal echo? Yet I think
He would not dare—what think'st

thou might he dare
Without my word for warrant? If I

knew

This—

Walsingham. It should profit not
your grace to know

What may not be conceivable for
truth

Without some stain on honor.

Elizabeth. Nay, I say not

That I would have him take upon his
hand

More than his trust may warrant: yet
have men,

Good men, for very truth of their good
hearts,

Put loyal hand to work as perilous
Well,

God wot I would not have him so trans-
gress —

If such be called transgressors.

Walsingham. Let the queen

Rest well assured he shall not. So far
forth

Our swordsman Savage witnesses of
these

That moved him toward your murder
but in trust

Thereby to bring invasion over sea:
Which one more gently natured of his

birth,

Tichborne, protests with very show of
truth

That he would give no ear to, knowing,
he saith,

The miseries of such conquest: nor, it
seems,

Heard this man aught of murderous
purpose bent

Against your highness.

Elizabeth. Naught? why then, again,
To him I am yet more bounden, who

may think,

Being found but half my traitor, at my
hands

To find but half a hangman.

Walsingham. Nay, the man

Herein seems all but half his own man,
being

Made merely out of stranger hearts and
brains

Their engine of conspiracy; for thus
Forsooth he pleads, that Babington his
friend

First showed him how himself was
wrought upon

By one man's counsel and persuasion,
one

Held of great judgment, — Ballard, on
whose head

All these lay all their forfeit.

Elizabeth. Yet shall each

Pay for himself red coin of ransom
down

In costlier drops than gold is. But of
these

Why take we thought? Their natural-
subject blood

Can wash not out their sanguine-sealed
attempt,

Nor leave us marked as tyrant: only
she

That is the head and heart of all your
fears,

Whose hope or fear is England's, quick
or dead,

Leaves or imperilled or impeached of
blood

Me, that with all but hazard of mine
own,

God knows, would yet redeem her. I
will write

With mine own hand to her privily, —
what else? —

Saying, if by word as privy from her
hand

She will confess her treasonous prac-
tices,

They shall be wrapped in silence up,
and she

By judgment live unscathed.

Walsingham. Being that she is,

So surely will she deem of your great
grace,

And see it but as a snare set wide, or
net

Spread in the bird's sight vainly.

Elizabeth. Why, then, well:

She, casting off my grace, from all
men's grace

Cuts off herself, and even aloud avows
By silence and suspect of jealous heart

Her manifest foul conscience: on which
proof

I will proclaim her to the parliament
So self-convicted. Yet I would not
have

Her name and life by mortal evidence
Touched at the trial of them that now
shall die,

Or by their charge attainted: lest my-
self

Fall in more peril of her friends than
she

Stands yet in shot of judgment.

Walsingham. Be assured,

Madam, the process of their treasons
judged

Shall tax not her before her trial-time
With public note of clear complicity

Even for that danger's sake which
moves you.

Elizabeth. Me

So much it moves not for my mere life's
sake —

Which I would never buy with fear of
death —

As for the general danger's, and the
shame's

Thence cast on queenship and on wo-
manhood

By mean of such a murderess. But,
for them,

I would the merited manner of their
death

Might for more note of terror be re-
ferred

To me and to my council: these at
least

Shall hang for warning in the world's
wide eye

More high than common traitors, with
more pains

Being ravished forth of their more vil-
lanous lives

Than feed the general throat of justice.
Her

Shall this too touch, whom none that
serves henceforth

But shall be sure of hire more terrible
Than all past wage of treason.

Walsingham. Why, so far

As law gives leave —

Elizabeth. What prat'st thou me of
law?

God's blood! is law for man's sake
 made, or man
 For law's sake only, to be held in
 bonds,
 Led lovingly like hound in huntsman's
 leash
 Or child by finger, not for help or stay,
 But hurt and hinderance? Is not all
 this land
 And all its hope and surety given to
 time
 Of sovereignty and freedom, all the
 fame
 And all the fruit of manhood hence to
 be,
 More than one rag or relic of its law
 Wherewith all these lie shackled? as
 too sure
 Have states no less than ours been
 done to death
 With gentle counsel and soft-handed
 rule
 For fear to snap one thread of ordi-
 nance
 Though thence the state were strangled.
Walsingham. Madam, yet
 There need no need be here of law's
 least breach,
 That of all else is worst necessity —
 Being such a mortal medicine to the
 state
 As poison drunk to expel a feverish
 taint
 Which air or sleep might purge as
 easily.
Elizabeth. Ay; but if air be poison-
 struck with plague,
 Or sleep to death lie palsied, fools
 were they,
 Faint hearts and faithless, who for
 health's fair sake
 Should fear to cleanse air, pierce and
 probe the trance,
 With purging fire or iron. Have your
 way.
 God send good end of all this, and procure
 Some mean whereby mine enemies'
 craft and his
 May take no feat but theirs in their
 own toils,
 And no blood shed be innocent as
 mine.

SCENE II. — CHARTLEY.

MARY BEATON and SIR AMYAS

PAULET.

Paulet. You should do well to bid
 her less be moved
 Who needs fear less of evil. Since we
 came
 Again from Tixall this wild mood of
 hers
 Hath vexed her more than all men's
 enmities
 Should move a heart more constant.
 Verily,
 I thought she had held more rule upon
 herself
 Than to call out on beggars at the
 gate
 When she rode forth, crying she had
 naught to give,
 Being all as much a beggar too as they,
 With all things taken from her.
Mary Beaton. Being so served,
 In sooth she should not show nor
 shame nor spleen.
 It was but seventeen days ye held her
 there
 Away from all attendance, as in bonds
 Kept without change of raiment, and
 to find,
 Being thence haled hither again, no
 nobler use,
 But all her papers plundered — then
 her keys
 By force of violent threat wrung from
 the hand
 She scarce could stir to help herself
 abed:
 These were no matters that should
 move her.
Paulet. None,
 If she be clean of conscience, whole of
 heart,
 Nor else than pure in purpose, but
 maligned
 Of men's suspicions: how should one
 thus wronged
 But hold all hard chance good to
 approve her case
 Blameless, give praise for all, turn all
 to thanks
 That might unload her of so sore a
 charge,

Despoiled not, but disburdened? Her
great wrath
Pleads hard against her, and itself
spake loud

Alone, ere other witness might unseal
Wrath's fierce interpretation: which
ere long

Was of her secretaries expounded.

Mary Beaton. Sir,
As you are honorable, and of equal
heart

Have shown such grace as man being
manful may

To such a piteous prisoner as desires
Naught now but what may hurt not
loyalty

Though you comply therewith to com-
fort her,

Let her not think your spirit so far
incensed

By wild words of her mistress cast on
you

In heat of heart and bitter fire of
spleen,

That you should now close ears against
a prayer

Which else might fairly find them
open.

Paulet. Speak

More short and plainly: what I well
may grant

Shall so seem easiest granted.

Mary Beaton. There should be
No cause, I think, to seal your lips up,
though

I crave of them but so much breath as
may

Give mine ear knowledge of the wit-
ness borne

(If aught of witness were against her
borne)

By those her secretaries you spake of.

Paulet. This

With hard expostulation was drawn
forth

At last of one and other, that they
twain

Had writ by record from their lady's
mouth

To Babington some letter which implies
Close conscience of his treason, and
good-will

To meet his service with complicity:

But one thing found therein of dead
liest note

The Frenchman swore they set not
down, nor she

Bade write one word of favor nor assent
Answering this murderous motion to-
ward our queen:

Only, saith he, she held herself not
bound

For love's sake to reveal it, and thereby
For love of enemies do to death such
friends

As only for her own love's sake were
found

Fit men for murderous treason: and
so much

Her own hand's transcript of the word
she sent

Should once produced bear witness of
her.

Mary Beaton. Ay?

How then came this withhelden?

Paulet. If she speak

But truth, why, truth should sure be
manifest,

And shall, with God's good-will, to
good men's joy

That wish not evil: as at Fotheringay
When she shall come to trial must be
tried

If it be truth or no: for which assay
You shall do toward her well and faith-
fully

To bid her presently prepare her soul
That it may there make answer.

Mary Beaton. Presently?

Paulet. Upon the arraignment of her
friends who stand

As 'twere at point of execution now
Ere sentence pass upon them of their
sin.

Would you no more with me?

Mary Beaton. I am bounden to you
For thus much tidings granted.

Paulet. So farewell. *[Exit.*

Mary Beaton. So fare I well or ill as
one who knows

He shall not fare much further toward
his end.

Here looms on me the landmark of my
life,

That I have looked for now some score
of years

<p>Even with long-suffering eagerness of heart And a most hungry patience. I did know, Yea, God, thou knowest I knew this all that while, From that day forth when even these eyes beheld Fall the most faithful head in all the world, Toward her most loving, and of me most loved, By doom of hers that was so loved of him He could not love me nor his life at all, Nor his own soul, nor aught that all men love, Nor could fear death nor very God, or care If there were aught more merciful in heaven Than love on earth had been to him. Chastelard, I have not had the name upon my lips That stands for sign of love the truest in man Since first love made him sacrifice of men, This long sad score of years retributive Since it was cast out of her heart and mind Who made it mean a dead thing; nor, I think, Will she remember it before she die More than in France the memories of old friends Are like to have yet forgotten; but for me, Haply, thou knowest, so death not all be death If all these years I have had not in my mind Through all these chances this one thought in all,— That I shall never leave her till she die. Nor surely now shall I much longer serve Who fain would lie down at her foot and sleep, Fain, fain have done with waking. Yet my soul</p>	<p>Knows, and yet God knows, I would set not hand To such a work as might put on the time, And make death's foot more forward for her sake : Yea, were it to deliver mine own soul From bondage and long-suffering of my life, I would not set mine hand to work her wrong. Tempted I was — but hath God need of me To work his judgment, bring his time about, Approve his justice if the word be just, That whoso doeth shall suffer his own deed, Bear his own blow, to weep tears back for tears, And bleed for bloodshed? God should spare me this That once I held the one good hope on earth, — To be the mean and engine of her end, Or some least part at least therein: I prayed, God, give me so much grace — who now should pray, Tempt me not, God. My heart swelled once to know I bore her death about me; as I think Indeed I bear it: but what need hath God That I should clinch his doom with craft of mine? What needs the wrath of hot Elizabeth Be blown aflame with mere past writing read, Which hath to enkindle it higher all ready proof Of present practice on her state and life? Shall fear of death or love of England fail, Or memory faint, or foresight fall stark blind, That there should need the whet and spur of shame To turn her spirit into some chafing snake's, And make its fang more feared for mortal? Yet</p>
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I am glad, and I repent me not, to know
I have the writing in my bosom sealed
That bears such matter, with her own
hand signed,

As she that yet repents her not to have
writ

Repents her not that she refrained to
send,

And fears not but long since it felt the
fire —

Being fire itself to burn her, yet un-
quenched,

But in my hand here covered harmless
up

Which had in charge to burn it. What
perchance

Might then the reading of it have
wrought for us,

If all this fiery poison of her scoffs
Making the foul froth of a serpent's
tongue

More venomous, and more deadly
toward her queen,

Even Bess of Hardwick's bitterest
babbling tales,

Had touched at heart the Tudor vein
indeed?

Enough it yet were surely, though that
vein

Were now the gentlest that such hearts
may hold,

And all doubt's trembling balance that
way bent,

To turn, as with one mortal grain cast
in,

The scale of grace against her life that
writ,

And weigh down pity deathward.

Enter MARY STUART.

Mary Stuart. Have we found
Such kindness of our keeper as may
give

Some ease from expectation? or must
hope

Still fret for ignorance how long here
we stay

As men abiding judgment?

Mary Beaton. Now not long,
He tells me, need we think to tarry;
since

The time and place of trial are set, next
month

To hold it in the castle of Fotheringay.

Mary Stuart. Why, he knows well
I were full easily moved

To set forth hence; there must I find
more scope

To commune with the ambassador of
France

By letter thence to London: but, God
help,

Think these folk truly, doth she verily
think,

What never man durst yet, nor woman
dreamed,

May one that is nor man nor woman
think,

To bring a queen born subject of no
laws

Here in subjection of an alien law
By foreign force of judgment? Were
she wise,

Might she not have me privily made
away?

And being nor wise, nor valiant but of
tongue,

Could she find yet foolhardiness of heart
Enough to attain the rule of royal
rights

With murderous madness? I will think
not this

Till it be proven indeed.

Mary Beaton. A month come round,
This man protests, will prove it.

Mary Stuart. Ay! protests?
What protestation of what Protestant

Can unmake law that was of God's
mouth made,

Unwrite the writing of the world, unsay
The general saying of ages? If I go,

Compelled of God's hand or constrained
of man's,

Yet God shall bid me not nor man
enforce

My tongue to plead before them for my
life.

I had rather end as kings before me,
die

Rather by shot or stroke of murderous
hands,

Than so make answer once in face of
man

As one brought forth to judgment. Are
they mad,

And she most mad for envious heart of
all,

To make so mean account of me?
 Methought,
 When late we came back hither, soiled
 and spent
 And sick with travel, I had seen their
 worst of wrong
 Full-faced, with its most outrage: when
 I found
 My servant Curle's young new-delivered
 wife
 Without priest's comfort, and her babe
 unblest,
 A nameless piteous thing born ere its
 time,
 And took it from the mother's arms
 abed,
 And bade her have good comfort, since
 myself
 Would take all charge against her hus-
 band laid
 On mine own head to answer,— deem-
 ing not
 Man ever durst bid answer for my-
 self
 On charge as mortal, — and, mine almo-
 ner gone,
 Did I not crave of Paulet for a grace
 His chaplain might baptize me this poor
 babe,
 And was denied it, and with mine own
 hands
 For shame and charity moved to chris-
 ten her
 There with scant ritual, in his heretic
 sight,
 By mine own woful name, whence God,
 I pray,
 For her take off its presage? I mis-
 deemed,
 Who deemed all these and yet far more
 than these
 For one born queen indignities enough,
 On one crowned head enough of buf-
 fets. more
 Hath time's hand laid upon me; yet I
 keep
 Faith in one word I spake to Paulet, say-
 ing
 Two things were mine though I stood
 spoiled of all
 As of my letters and my privy coin
 By pickpurse hands of office: these
 things yet

Might none take thievish hold upon to
 strip
 His prisoner naked of her natural
 dower, —
 The blood yet royal running here un-
 spilled,
 And that religion which I think to keep
 Fast as this royal blood until I die.
 So, where at last and howsoe'er I fare,
 I need not much take thought, nor thou
 for love
 Take of thy mistress pity: yet meseems
 They dare not work their open will on
 me;
 But God's it is that shall be done, and I
 Find end of all in quiet. I would sleep
 On this strange news of thine, that
 being awake
 I may the freshlier front my sense there-
 of
 And thought of life or death. Come in
 with me.

SCENE III. — TYBURN.

A Crowd of Citizens.

First Citizen. Is not their hour yet
 on? Men say the queen
 Bade spare no jot of torment in their
 end
 That law might lay upon them.
Second Citizen. Truth it is,
 To spare what scourge soe'er man's
 justice may
 Twist for such caitiff traitors, were to
 grieve
 God's with mere inobservance. Hear
 you not
 How yet the loud lewd braggarts of
 their side
 Keep heart to threaten that for all this
 foil
 They are not foiled indeed, but yet the
 work
 Shall prosper with deliverance of their
 queen,
 And death for her of ours, though they
 should give
 Of their own lives for one an hundred-
 fold?

Third Citizen. These are bold
 mouths: one that shall die to-
 day

Being this last week arraigned at Westminster,
Had no such heart, they say, to his defence,
Who was the main head of their treasons.

First Citizen. Ay,
And yesterday, if truth belie not him,
Durst with his doomed hand write some word of prayer
To the queen's self, her very grace, to crave
Grace of her for his gracelessness, that she
Might work, on one too tainted to deserve,
A miracle of compassion, whence her fame
For pity of sins too great for pity of man
Might shine more glorious than his crime showed foul
In the eye of such a mercy.

Second Citizen. Yet men said
He spake at his arraignment soberly
With clear mild looks and gracious gesture, showing
The purport of his treasons in such wise
That it seemed pity of him to hear them, how
All their beginnings and proceedings had
First head and fountain only for their spring
From ill persuasions of that poisonous priest
Who stood the guiltiest near, by this man's side
Approved a valiant villain. Barnwell next,
Who came but late from Ireland here to court,
Made simply protestation of design
To work no personal ill against the queen,
Nor paint rebellion's face as murder's red
With blood imperial: Tichborne then avowed
He knew the secret of their aim, and kept,

And held forsooth himself no traitor, yet
In the end would even plead guilty: Donne with him,
And Salisbury, who not less professed he still
Stood out against the killing of the queen,
And would not hurt her for a kingdom. So,
When thus all these had pleaded, one by one
Was each man bid say fairly, for his part,
Why sentence should not pass: and Ballard first,
Who had been so sorely racked he might not stand,
Spake, but as seems to none effect; of whom
Said Babington again, he set them on,
He first, and most of all him, who believed
This priest had power to assoil his soul alive
Of all else mortal treason. Ballard then,
As in sad scorn — *Yea, Master Babington,*
Quoth he, lay all upon me, but I wish
For you the shedding of my blood might be
The saving of your life: howbeit, for that,
Say what you will; and I will say no more.
Nor spake the swordsman Savage aught again,
Who, first arraigned, had first avowed his cause
Guilty; nor yet spake Tichborne aught but Donne
Spake, and the same said Barnwell, — each had sinned
For very conscience only; Salisbury last
Besought the queen remission of his guilt.
Then spake Sir Christopher Hatton for the rest
That sat with him commissioners, and showed

How by dark doctrine of the semina-
ries,
And instance most of Ballard, had been
brought
To extreme destruction here of body
and soul
A sort of brave youths otherwise en-
dowed
With goodly gifts of birthright; and in
fine
There was the sentence given that here
even now
Shows seven for dead men in our pres-
ent sight,
And shall bring six to-morrow forth to
die.

*Enter BABINGTON, BALLARD (carried
in a chair), TICHBORNE, SAVAGE,
BARNWELL, TILNEY, and ABINGTON,
guarded: Sheriff, Executioner, Chap-
lain, etc.*

First Citizen. What, will they speak?

Second Citizen. Ay; each hath leave
in turn

To show what mood he dies in toward
his cause.

Ballard. Sirs, ye that stand to see
us take our doom,

I being here given this grace to speak
to you

Have but my word to witness for my
soul,

That all I have done and all designed
to do

Was only for advancement of true faith
To furtherance of religion: for myself
Aught would I never, but for Christ's
dear church

Was mine intent all wholly, to redeem
Her sore affliction in this age and land,
As now may not be yet: which know-
ing for truth,

I am readier even at heart to die than
live.

And dying I crave of all men pardon
whom

My doings at all have touched, or who
thereat

Take scandal; and forgiveness of the
queen

If on this cause I have offended her.

Savage. The like say I, that have no
skill in speech,

But heart enough with faith at heart to
die,

Seeing but for conscience and the com-
mon good,

And no preferment but this general
weal,

I did attempt this business.

Barnwell. I confess

That I, whose seed was of that hallowed
earth

Whereof each pore hath sweated blood
for Christ,

Had note of these men's drifts, which I
deny

That ever I consented with, or could

In conscience hold for lawful. That I
came

To spy for them occasions in the court,
And there being noted of her Majesty

She seeing mine eyes peer sharply like
a man's

That had such purpose as she wist
before

Prayed God that all were well—if this
were urged,

I might make answer, it was not un-
known

To divers of the council that I there

Had matters to solicit of mine own

Which thither drew me then: yet I
confess

That Babington, espying me thence
returned,

Asked me what news: to whom again
I told,

Her majesty had been abroad that
day,

With all the circumstance I saw there.
Now,

If I have done her majesty offence,

I crave her pardon: and assuredly

If this my body's sacrifice might yet

Establish her in true religion, here

Most willingly should this be offered
up.

Tilney. I came not here to reason of
my faith,

But to die simply like a Catholic, pray-
ing

Christ give our queen Elizabeth long
life,

And warning all youth born take heed
by me.

Abington. I likewise, and if aught I
have erred in aught
I crave but pardon as for ignorant sin,
Holding at all points firm the Catholic
faith;
And all things charged against me I
confess,
Save that I ever sought her highness'
death:
In whose poor kingdom yet ere long, I
fear,
Will be great bloodshed.

Sheriff. Seest thou, Abington,
Here all these people present of thy
kind
Whose blood shall be demanded at thy
hands
If dying thou hide what might en-
danger them?
Speak therefore, why or by what mor-
tal mean
Should there be shed such blood?

Abington. All that I know
You have on record: take but this for
sure,—
This country lives for its iniquity
Loathed of all countries, and God loves
it not.
Whereon I pray you trouble me no
more
With questions of this world, but let
me pray,
And in mine own wise make my peace
with God.

Babington. For me, first head of all
this enterprise,
I needs must make this record of my-
self,
I have not conspired for profit, but in
trust
Of men's persuasions whence I stood
assured
This work was lawful which I should
have done,
And meritorious as toward God; for
which
No less I crave forgiveness of my queen,
And that my brother may possess my
lands
In heritage else forfeit with my head.

Tichborne. Good countrymen and my
dear friends, you look
For something to be said of me, that am

But an ill orator; and my text is
worse.

Vain were it to make full discourse of
all

This cause that brings me hither, which
before

Was all made bare, and is well known
to most

That have their eyes upon me: let me
stand

For all young men, and most for those
born high,

Their present warning here: a friend I
had,

Ay, and a dear friend, one of whom I
made

No small account, whose friendship for
pure love

To this hath brought me: I may not
deny

He told me all the matter, how set
down,

And ready to be wrought; which al-
ways I

Held impious, and denied to deal there-
in:

But only for my friend's regard was I
Silent, and verified a saying in me,

Who so consented to him. Ere this
thing chanced,

How brotherly we twain lived heart in
heart

Together, in what flourishing estate,
This town well knows: of whom went

all report
Through her loud length of Fleet-street

and the Strand
And all parts else that sound men's

fortunate names,
But Babington and Tichborne? that

therein
There was no haughtiest threshold

fount of force
To brave our entry; thus we lived our

life,
And wanted nothing we might wish for:

then,
For me, what less was in my head, God

knows,
Than high state matters? Give me

now but leave
Scarce to declare the miseries I sus-
tained

Since I took knowledge of this action,
 whence
 To his estate I well may liken mine,
 Who could forbear not one forbidden
 thing
 To enjoy all else afforded of the world:
 The terror of my conscience hung on
 me;
 Who, taking heed what perils girt me,
 went
 To Sir John Peters hence in Essex,
 there
 Appointing that my horses by his mean
 Should meet me here in London,
 whence I thought
 To flee into the country: but being
 here
 I heard how all was now bewrayed
 abroad;
 Whence Adam-like we fled into the
 woods,
 And there were taken. My dear coun-
 trymen,
 Albeit my sorrows well may be your
 joy,
 Yet mix your smiles with tears: pity
 my case,
 Who, born out of an house whose name
 descends
 Even from two hundred years ere Eng-
 lish earth
 Felt Norman heel upon her, wore it
 yet
 Till this mishap of mine unspotted.
 Sirs,
 I have a wife, and one sweet child: my
 wife,
 My dear wife Agnes: and my grief is
 there;
 And for six sisters too left on my hand:
 All my poor servants were dispersed, I
 know,
 Upon their master's capture: all which
 things
 Most heartily I sorrow for: and though
 Naught might I less have merited at
 her hands,
 Yet had I looked for pardon of my
 fault
 From the queen's absolute grace and
 clemency;
 That the unexpired remainder of my

Might in some sort have haply recom-
 pensed
 This former guilt of mine whereof I
 die:
 But seeing such fault may find not such
 release
 Even of her utter mercies, heartily
 I crave at least of her and all the world
 Forgiveness, and to God commend my
 soul,
 And to men's memory this my penitence
 Till our death's record die from out the
 land.
First Citizen. God pardon him!
 Stand back: what ail these
 knaves
 To drive and thrust upon us? Help
 me, sir;
 I thank you: hence we take them full
 in view:
 Hath yet the hangman there his knife
 in hand?

ACT III.—BURGHLEY.

SCENE I.—*The presence-chamber in Fotheringhay Castle. At the upper end, a chair of state as for QUEEN ELIZABETH; opposite, in the centre of the hall, a chair for MARY STUART. The Commissioners seated on either side along the wall: to the right, the Earls, with LORD CHANCELLOR BROMLEY and LORD TREASURER BURGHLEY; to the left, the Barons, with the Knights of the Privy Council, among them WALSINGHAM and PAULET; POPHAM, EGERTON, and GAWDY, as Counsel for the Crown. Enter MARY STUART, supported by SIR ANDREW MELVILLE, and takes her place.*

Mary Stuart. Here are full many
 men of counsel met;
 Not one for me.

[*The Chancellor rises.*
Bromley. Madam, this court is held
 To make strait inquisition as by law
 Of what with grief of heart our queen
 has heard,—
 A plot upon her life, against the faith
 Here in her kingdom stablished: on
 which cause

Our charge it is to exact your answer
here,
And put to proof your guilt or innocence.

Mary Stuart (rising). Sirs, whom by
strange constraint I stand before,
My lords, and not my judges, — since
no law

Can hold to mortal judgment answerable

A princess free-born of all courts on
earth, —

I rise not here to make response as one
Responsible toward any for my life,
Or of mine acts accountable to man,
Who see none higher save only God in
heaven.

I am no natural subject of your land,
That I should here plead as a criminal
charged,

Nor in such wise appear I now: I came
On your queen's faith to seek in Eng-
land help

By trothplight pledged me: where by
promise-breach

I am even since then her prisoner held
in ward:

Yet, understanding by report of you
Some certain things I know not of to
be

Against me brought on record, by my
will

I stand content to hear and answer
these.

Bromley. Madam, there lives none
born on earth so high

Who for this land's laws' breach within
this land

Shall not stand answerable before those
laws.

Burghley. Let there be record of the
prisoner's plea

And answer given such protest here set
down,

And so proceed we to this present
charge.

Gawdy. My lords, to unfold by length
of circumstance

The model of this whole conspiracy
Should lay the pattern of all treasons
bare

That ever brought high state in danger.
This

No man there lives among us but hath
heard, —

How certain men of our queen's house-
hold folk,

Being wrought on by persuasion of
their priests,

Drew late a bond between them, bind-
ing these

With others of their faith accomplices
Directed first of Anthony Babington

By mean of six for execution chosen
To slay the queen their mistress, and
thereon

Make all her trustiest men of trust
away;

As, my lord treasurer Burghley present
here,

Lord Hunsdon, and Sir Francis Wal-
singham,

And one that held in charge a while
agone

This lady now on trial, — Sir Francis
Knowles.

That she was hereto privy, to her power
Approving and abetting their device,

It shall not stand us in much need to
show,

Whose proofs are manifoldly manifest
On record written of their hands and
hers.

Mary Stuart. Of all this I know noth-
ing: Babington

I have used for mine intelligencer, sent
With letters charged at need, but never
yet

Spake with him, never writ him word
of mine

As privy to these close conspiracies,
Nor word of his had from him. Never
came

One harmful thought upon me toward
your queen,

Nor knowledge ever that of other hearts
Was harm designed against her.

Proofs, ye say,
Forsooth ye hold to impeach me: I
desire

But only to behold and handle them
If they in sooth of sense be tangible

More than mere air and shadow.
Burghley. Let the clerk

Produce those letters writ from Babing-
ton.

Mary Stuart. What then? It may be
such were writ of him:
Be it proved that they came ever in my
hands.

If Babington affirm so much, I say
He, or who else will say it, lies openly.

Gawdy. Here is the man's confession
writ; and here

Ballard's the Jesuit; and the soldier's
here,

Savage, that served with Parma.

Mary Stuart. What of these?

Traitors they were, and traitor-like they
lied.

Gawdy. And here the last her letter
of response

Confirming and approving in each
point

Their purpose, writ direct to Babington.

Mary Stuart. My letter? None of
mine it is . perchance

It may be in my cipher charactered,
But never came from or my tongue or
hand.

I have sought mine own deliverance,
and thereto

Solicited of my friends their natural
help:

Yet certain whom I list not name there
were,

Whose offers made of help to set me
free

Receiving, yet I answered not a word.
Howbeit, desiring to divert the storm

Of persecution from the Church, for
this

To your queen's grace I have made
most earnest suit:

But for mine own part, I would pur-
chase not

This kingdom with the meanest one
man's death

In all its commonalty, much less the
queen's.

Many there be have dangerously
designed

Things that I knew not: yea, but very
late

There came a letter to my hand which
craved

My pardon if by enterprise of some
Were undertaken aught unknown of
me.

A cipher lightly may one counterfeit,
As he that vaunted him of late in

France

To be my son's base brother; and I
fear

Lest this, for aught mine ignorance of
it knows,

May be that secretary's fair handiwork
Who sits to judge me, and hath prac-

tised late,

I hear, against my son's life and mine
own.

But I protest I have not so much as
thought

Nor dreamed upon destruction of the
queen:

I had rather spend most gladly mine
own life

Than for my sake the Catholics should
be thus

Afflicted only in very hate of me,
And drawn to death so cruel as these

tears

Gush newly forth to think of.

Burghley. Here no man

Who hath showed himself true subject
to the state

Was ever for religion done to death;
But some for treason, that against the

queen

Upheld the pope's bull and authority.

Mary Stuart. Yet have I heard it
otherwise affirmed,

And read in books set forth in print as
much.

Burghley. They that so write say too
the queen hath here

Made forfeit of her royal dignity.

Walsingham. Here I call God to
record on my part

That personally or as a private man
I have done naught misbecoming

honesty,

Nor as I bear a public person's place
Done aught thereof unworthy. I con-

fess

That, being right careful of the queen's
estate

And safety of this realm, I have
curiously

Searched out the practices against it
nay,

Herein had Ballard offered me his help

I durst not have denied him; yea, I
would

I have recompensed the pains he had
taken. Say

I have practised aught with him, why
did he not,

To save his life, reveal it?

Mary Stuart. Pray you, sir,

Take no displeasure at me. truth it is
Report has found me of your dealings,
blown

From lip to ear abroad, wherein myself
I put no credit; and could but desire
Yourself would all as little make
account

Of slanders flung on me. Spies, sure,
are men

Of doubtful credit, which dissemble
things

Far other than they speak. Do not
believe

That I gave ever or could give consent
Once to the queen's destruction. I
would never,

These tears are bitter witness, never
would

Make shipwreck of my soul by com-
passing

Destruction of my dearest sister.

Garody. This

Shall soon by witness be disproved: as
here

Even by this letter from Charles Paget's
hand

Transcribed, which Curle your secre-
tary hath borne,

Plain witness you received, touching a
league

Betwixt Mendoza and Ballard, who con-
ferred

Of this land's fore-ordained invasion,
thence

To give you freedom.

Mary Stuart. What of this? ye shoot
Wide of the purpose. this approves
not me

Consenting to the queen's destruction.

Garody. That stands proven enough
by word of Babington,

Who dying avowed it, and by letters
passed

From him to you, whom he therein
acclaims

As his most dread and sovereign lady
and queen,

And by the way makes mention pass-
ingly

Of a plot laid by transference to con-
vey

This kingdom to the Spaniard.

Mary Stuart. I confess

There came a priest unto me, saying if I
Would not herein bear part, I with my
son

Alike should be debarred the inheri-
tance:

His name ye shall not have of me; but
this

Ye know, that openly the Spaniard lays
Claim to your kingdom, and to none
will give

Place ever save to me.

Burghley. Still stands the charge,
On written witness of your secretaries.
Great on all points against you.

Mary Stuart. Wherefore then

Are not these writers with these writ-
ings brought

To outface me front to front? For
Gilbert Curle,

He is in the Frenchman's hands a
waxen toy,

Whom the other, once mine uncle's
secretary,

The Cardinal's of Lorraine, at his mere
will

Moulds, turns, and tempers, being him-
self a knave

That may be hired or scared with peril
or com

To swear what thing men bid him.
Truth again

Is this that I deny not, seeing myself
Against all right held fast in English
ward,

I have sought all help where I might
hope to find;

Which thing that I dispute not, let this
be

The sign that I disclaim no jot of truth
In all objected to me. For the rest,

All majesty that moves in all the world,
And all safe station of all princes born,
Fall, as things unrespected, to the
ground,

If on the testimony of secretaries

And on their writings merely these
 depend,
 Being to their likeness thence debased.
 For me,
 Naught I delivered to them but what
 first
 Nature to me delivered, that I might
 Recover yet at length my liberty.
 I am not to be convicted save alone
 By mine own word or writing. If these
 men
 Have written toward the queen my sis-
 ter's hurt
 Aught, I wist naught of all such writ at
 all:
 Let them be put to punishment; I am
 sure,
 Were these here present, they by testi-
 mony
 Would bring me clear of blame.
Gawdy. Yet by their mean
 They could not in excuse of you deny
 That letters of communion to and
 fro
 Have passed between you and the Span-
 iard, whence
 What should have come on England
 and the queen
 These both well know, and with what
 messages
 Were English exiles entertained of you
 By mean of these men, of your secre-
 taries,
 Confirmed and cherished in conspiracy
 For this her kingdom's overthrow: in
 France
 Paget and Morgan, traitors in design
 Of one close mind with you, and in your
 name
 Cheered hence for constant service.
Mary Stuart. That I sought
 Comfort and furtherance of all Catho-
 lic states,
 By what mean found soever just and
 good,
 Your mistress from myself had note long
 since
 And open warning: uncompelled I
 made
 Avowal of such my righteous purpose,
 nor
 In aught may disavow it. Of these late
 plots

No proof is here to attain mine inno-
 cence,
 Who dare all proof against me: Babing-
 ton
 I know not of, nor Ballard, nor their
 works;
 But kings my kinsmen, powers that
 serve the Church,
 These I confess my comforters, in hope
 Held fast of their alliance. Yet again
 I challenge in the witness of my words
 The notes writ of these letters here
 alleged
 In mine own hand: if these ye bring not
 forth,
 Judge all good men if I be not con-
 demned
 In all your hearts already, who per-
 chance,
 For all this pageant held of lawless
 law,
 Have bound yourselves by pledge to
 speak me dead.
 But I would have you look into your
 souls,
 Remembering how the theatre of the
 world
 Is wider, in whose eye ye are judged that
 judge,
 Than this one realm of England.
Burghley. Toward that realm
 Suffice it here that, madam, you stand
 charged
 With deadly purpose: being of proven
 intent
 To have your son conveyed to Spain,
 and give
 The title you pretend upon our crown
 Up with his wardship to King Philip.
Mary Stuart. Nay,
 I have no kingdom left to assign, nor
 crown
 Whereof to make conveyance: yet is
 this
 But lawful, that of all things which are
 mine
 I may dispose at pleasure, and to none
 Stand on such count accountable.
Burghley. So be it
 So far as may be; but your ciphers
 sent
 By Curle's plain testimony to Babing-
 ton,

To the lord Lodovic, and to Fernihurst,
Once provost on your part in Edinburgh,
By mean of Grange your friend his
father-in-law,

Speak not but as with tongue imperial,
nor

Of import less than kingdoms.

Mary Stuart. Surely, sir,
Such have I writ, and many; nor there-
in

Beyond my birth have trespassed, to
commend

That lord you speak of, and another,
both

My friends in faith, to a cardinal's dig-
nity,

And that, I trust, without offence:
except

It be not held as lawful on my part
To commune with the chiefest of my
creed

By written word on matters of mine own
As for your queen with churchfolk of
her kind.

Burghley. Well were it, madam, that
with some of yours
You had held less close communion:
since by proof

Reiterated from those your secretaries
It seems you know right well that Mor-
gan who

Sent Parry privily to despatch the queen,
And have assigned him annual pension.

Mary Stuart. This
I know not, whether or no your charge
be truth;

But I do know this Morgan hath lost
all

For my sake, and in honor sure I am
That rather to relieve him I stand
bound,

Than to revenge an injury done your
queen

By one that lives my friend, and hath
deserved

Well at mine hands: yet, being not
bound to this,

I did affright the man from such
attempts

Of crimes against her, who contrariwise
Hath out of England openly assigned
Pensions to Gray my traitor, and the
Scots

Mine adversaries, as also to my son,
To hire him to forsake me.

Burghley. Nay, but seeing
By negligence of them that steered the
state

The revenues of Scotland sore impaired,
Somewhat in bounty did her grace
bestow

Upon your son the king, her kinsman:
whom

She would not, being to her so near of
blood,

Forget from charity. No such help it
was,

Nor no such honest service, that your
friends

Designed you, who by letters hither
writ

To Paget and Mendoza sent as here
Large proffers of strange aid from over-
sea

To right you by her ruin.

Mary Stuart. Here was naught
Aimed for your queen's destruction:
nor is this

Against me to be charged, that foreign
friends

Should labor for my liberty. Thus
much

At sundry times I have signified aloud
By open message to her, that I would
still

Seek mine own freedom. Who shall
bar me this?

Who tax me with unreason, that I sent
Unjust conditions on my part to be

To her propounded, which now many
times

Have alway found rejection? yea, when
even

For hostages I proffered in my stead
To be delivered up with mine own
son

The Duke of Guise's, both to stand in
pledge

That nor your queen nor kingdom
should through me

Take aught of damage; so that hence
by proof

I see myself utterly from all hope
Already barred of freedom. But I now
Am dealt with most unworthily, whose
fame

And honorable repute are called in
doubt
Before such foreign men of law as may
By miserable conclusions of their craft
Draw every thin and shallow circum-
stance
Out into compass of a consequence:
Whereas the anointed heads and con-
secrate
Of princes are not subject to such laws
As private men are. Next, whereas ye
are given
Authority but to look such matters
through
As tend to the hurt of your queen's
person, yet
Here is the cause so handled, and so
far
Here are my letters wrested, that the
faith
Which I profess, the immunity and
state
Of foreign princes, and their private
right
Of mutual speech by word reciprocate
From royal hand to royal, all in one
Are called in question, and myself by
force
Brought down beneath my kingly
dignity,
And made to appear before a judg-
ment-seat
As one held guilty; to none end but this,
all to none other purpose, but that I
Might from all natural favor of the
queen
Be quite excluded, and my right cut
off
From claim hereditary: whereas I
stand
Here of mine own good-will to clear
myself
Of all objected to me, lest I seem
To have aught neglected in the full
defence
Of mine own innocency and honor.
This
Would I bring likewise in your minds,
how once
This queen herself of yours, Elizabeth,
Was drawn in question of conspiracy
That Wyatt raised against her sister,
yet

Ye know she was most innocent. For
me,
With very heart's religion I affirm,
Though I desire the Catholics here
might stand
Assured of safety, this I would not yet
Buy with the blood and death of any
one.
And on mine own part rather would I
play
Esther than Judith; for the people's
sake
To God make intercession, than deprive
The meanest of the people born of
life.
Mine enemies have made broad repor
aloud
That I was irreligious: yet the time
Has been, I would have learnt the faith
ye hold,
But none would suffer me, for all I
sought,
To find such teaching at your teachers
hands;
As though they cared not what my sou
became.
And now at last, when all ye can ye
have done
Against me, and have barred me from
my right,
Ye may chance fail yet of your cause
and hope.
To God and to the princes of my kin
I make again appeal, from you again
Record my protestation, and reject
All judgment of your court: I had
rather die
Thus undishonored, even a thousand
deaths,
Than so bring down the height of
majesty;
Yea, and thereby confess myself as
bound
By all the laws of England, even in
faith
Of things religious, who could never
learn
What manner of laws these were: I am
destitute
Of counsellors, and who shall be my
peers
To judge my cause through, and give
doom thereon.

I am ignorant wholly, being an absolute
 queen,
 And will do naught which may impair
 that state
 In me nor other princes, nor my son;
 Since yet my mind is not dejected, nor
 Will I sink under my calamity.
 My notes are taken from me, and no
 man
 Dares but step forth to be my advocate.
 I am clear from all crime done against
 the queen,
 I have stirred not up one man against
 her: yet,
 Albeit of many dangers overpast
 I have thoroughly forewarned her, still
 I found
 No credit, but have always been con-
 temned,
 Though nearest to her in blood allied.
 When late
 Ye made association, and thereon
 An act against their lives on whose
 behalf,
 Though innocent even as ignorance of
 it, aught
 Might be contrived to endangering of
 the queen
 From foreign force abroad, or privy
 plots
 At home of close rebellion, I foresaw
 That, whatsoever of peril so might rise
 Or more than all this for religion's
 sake,
 My many mortal enemies in her court
 Should lay upon me all the charge,
 and I
 Bear the whole blame of all men.
 Certainly,
 I well might take it hardly, nor without
 High cause, that such confederacy was
 made
 With mine own son, and I not know-
 ing: but this
 I speak not of, being not so grieved
 thereat
 As that mine own dear sister, that the
 queen,
 Is misinformed of me, and I, now kept
 These many years in so strait prison,
 and grown
 Lame of my limbs, have lien neglected,
 nor

For all most reasonable conditions
 made
 Or proffered to redeem my liberty
 Found audience or acceptance; and at
 last
 Here am I set with none to plead for
 me.
 But this I pray, that on this matter of
 mine
 Another meeting there be kept, and I
 Be granted on my part an advocate
 To hold my cause up; or that, seeing
 ye know
 I am a princess, I may be believed
 By mine own word, being princely: for
 should I
 Stand to your judgment, who most
 plainly I see
 Are armed against me strong in preju-
 dice,
 It were mine extreme folly: more than
 this,
 That ever I came to England in such
 trust
 As of the plighted friendship of your
 queen,
 And comfort of her promise. Look,
 my lords,
 Here on this ring: her pledge of love
 was this,
 And surety, sent me when I lay in
 bonds
 Of mine own rebels once; regard it
 well;
 In trust of this I came amongst you:
 none
 But sees what faith I have found to
 keep this trust.
Burghley. Whereas I bear a double
 person, being
 Commissioner first, then counsellor in
 this cause,
 From me as from the queen's commis-
 sioner here
 Receive a few words first. Your prot-
 est made
 Is now on record, and a transcr'pt of it
 Shall be delivered you. To us is given
 Under the queen's hand our authority,
 whence
 Is no appeal, this grant being ratif'd
 With the great seal of England; nor
 are we

With prejudice come hither, but to
 judge
 By the straight rule of justice. On
 their part,
 These the queen's learned counsel here
 in place
 Do level at nothing else but that the
 truth
 May come to light, how far you have
 made offence
 Against the person of the queen. To
 us
 Full power is given to hear and dili-
 gently
 Examine all the matter, though your-
 self
 Were absent: yet for this did we
 desire
 To have your presence here, lest we
 might seem
 To have derogated from your honor;
 nor
 Designed to object against you any
 thing
 But what you knew of, or took part
 therein,
 Against the queen's life bent. For
 this were these
 Your letters brought in question, but to
 unfold
 Your aim against her person, and
 therewith
 All matters to it belonging; which per-
 force
 Are so with other matters interlaced
 As none may sever them. Hence was
 there need
 Set all these forth, not parcels here
 and there,
 Whose circumstances do the assurance
 give
 Upon what points you dealt with Bab-
 ington.

Mary Stuart. The circumstances
 haply may find proof,
 But the fact never. Mine integrity
 Nor on the memory nor the credit
 hangs
 Of these my secretaries, albeit I know
 They are men of honest hearts. yet if
 they have
 Confessed in fear of torture any thing,
 Or hope of guerdon and impunity,

It may not be admitted, for just cause
 Which I will elsewhere allege. Men's
 minds
 Are with affections diversly distraught
 And borne about of passion: no:
 would these
 Have ever avowed such things against
 me, save
 For their own hope and profit. Letters
 may
 Toward other hands be outwardly ad-
 dressed
 Than they were writ for: yea, and many
 times
 Have many things been privily slipped
 in mine
 Which from my tongue came never.
 Were I not
 Reft of my papers, and my secre-
 tary
 Kept from me, better might I then
 confute
 These things cast up against me.
Burghley. But there shall
 Be nothing brought against you save
 what last
 Stands charged, even since the nine-
 teenth day of June:
 Nor would your papers here avail you
 seeing
 Your secretaries, and Babington him-
 self,
 Being of the rack unquestioned, have
 affirmed
 You sent those letters to him; which
 though yourself
 Deny, yet whether more belief should
 here
 On affirmation or negation hang
 Let the commissioners judge. But, to
 come back,
 This next I tell you as a counsellor,
 Time after time you have put forth
 many things
 Propounded for your freedom; that all
 these
 Have fallen all profitless, 'tis long of
 you,
 And of the Scots; in no wise of the
 queen.
 For first the lords of Scotland, being
 required,
 Flatly resused, to render up the king

In hostage: and when treaty last was held
Upon your freedom, then was Parry sent

By your dependant Morgan privily
To make the queen away by murder.

Mary Stuart. Ah!

You are my adversary.

Burghley. Yea, surely I am

To the queen's adversaries an adversary.

But now hereof enough: let us proceed
Henceforth to proofs.

Mary Stuart. I will not hear them.

Burghley. Yet

Hear them will we.

Mary Stuart. And in another place
I too will hear them, and defend myself.

Gawdy. First let your letters to
Charles Paget speak,

Wherein you show him there is none
other way

For Spain to bring the Netherlands
again

To the old obedience, but by setting up
A prince in England that might help
his cause;

Then to Lord Paget, to bring hastiler
His forces up for help to invade this
land;

And Cardinal Allen's letter, hailing you
His most dread sovereign lady, and signifying

The matter to the prince of Parma's
care

To be commended.

Mary Stuart. I am so sore beset,
I know not how by point and circumstance

To meet your manifold impeachments.
This

I see through all this charge for evil
truth,

That Babington and my two secretaries
Have even to excuse themselves accused me: yet,

As touching that conspiracy, this I
say,

Of those six men for execution chosen
I never heard; and all the rest is
naught

To this pretended purpose of your
charge.

For Cardinal Allen, whatsoe'er he have
writ,

I hold him for a reverend prelate, so
To be esteemed, no more: none save
the Pope

Will I acknowledge for the Church's
head

And sovereign thence on thought or
spirit of mine;

But in what rank and place I stand
esteemed

Of him and foreign princes through the
world,

I know not, neither can I hinder
them

By letters writ of their own hearts and
hands

To hail me queen of England. As for
those

Whose duty and plain allegiance sworn
to me

Stands flawed in all men's sight, — my
secretaries, —

These merit no belief. They which
have once

Forsworn themselves, albeit they swear
again

With oaths and protestations ne'er so
great,

Are not to be believed. Nor may
these men

By what sworn oath soever hold them
bound

In court of conscience, seeing they
have sworn to me

Their secrecy and fidelity before,
And are no subjects of this country.

Nau
Hath many times writ other than I
bade,

And Curle sets down whate'er Nau bids
him write;

But for my part I am ready in all to
bear

The burden of their fault, save what
may lay

A blot upon mine honor. Haply too
These things did they confess to save
themselves;

Supposing their avowal could hurt not
me,

Who, being a queen, they thought, good
ignorant men,

More favorably must needs be dealt
withal.

For Ballard, I ne'er heard of any such,
But of one Hallard once that proffered
me

Such help as I would none of, knowing
this man

Had vowed his service too to Walsing-
ham.

Garudy. Next, from your letters to
Mendoza, writ

By Curle, as freely his confession
shows,

In privy cipher, take these few brief
notes

For perfect witness of your full de-
sign.

You find yourself, the Spaniard hears
thereby,

Sore troubled what best course to take
anew

For your affairs this side the sea,
whereon

Charles Paget hath a charge to impart
from you

Some certain overtures to Spain and
him

In your behalf, whom you desire with
prayer

Show freely what he thinks may be
obtained

Thus from the king his master. One
point more

Have you reserved thereon depending,
which

On your behalf you charge him send
the king

Some secret word concerning, no man
else,

If this be possible, being privy to it :

Even this, that seeing your son's great
obstinacy

In heresy, and foreseeing too sure there-
on

Most imminent danger and harm thence
like to ensue

To the Catholic Church, he coming to
bear rule

Within this kingdom, you are resolved
at heart,

In case your son be not reduced again
To the Catholic faith before your death,

—whereof

Plainly you say small hope is yours se
long

As he shall bide in Scotland,—to give
up

To that said king, and grant in absolute
right,

Your claim upon succession to this
crown,

By your last will made; praying him
on this cause

From that time forth wholly to take
yourself

Into his keeping, and therewith the
state

And charge of all this country; which,
you say,

You cannot for discharge of conscience
think

That you could put into a prince's
hands

More zealous for your faith, and abler
found

To build it strong upon this side again,
Even as through all parts else of Chris-
tendom.

But this let silence keep in secret, lest
Being known it be your dowry's loss in

France,
And open breach in Scotland with your

son,
And in this realm of England utterly

Your ruin and destruction. On your
part

Next is he bidden thank his lord the
king

For liberal grace and sovereign favor
shown

Lord Paget and his brother, which you
pray him

Most earnestly to increase, and gratify
Poor Morgan with some pension for

your sake,
Who hath not for your sake only en-
dured so much,

But for the common cause. Likewise,
and last,

Is one he knows commended to his
charge

With some more full supply to be sus-
tained

Than the entertainment that yourself
allot

According to the little means you have.

Burghley. Hereon stands proof apparent of that charge
Which you but now put by, that you design
To give your right supposed upon this realm
Into the Spaniard's hold; and on that cause
Lie now at Rome Allen and Parsons, men

Your servants and our traitors.

Mary Stuart. No such proof
Lives but by witness of revolted men,
My traitors and your helpers; who to me

Have broken their allegiance bound by oath.

When, being a prisoner clothed about with cares,

I languished out of hope of liberty,

Nor yet saw hope to effect of those things aught

Which many and many looked for at my hands,

Declining now through age and sickness, this

To some seemed good, even for religion's sake,

That the succession here of the English crown

Should or be established in the Spanish king

Or in some English Catholic. And a book

Was sent to me to avow the Spaniard's claim;

Which being of me allowed not, some there were

In whose displeasure thence I fell; but now

Seeing all my hope in England desperate grown,

I am fully minded to reject no aid
Abroad, but resolute to receive it.

Walsingham. Sirs,
Bethink you, were the kingdom so conveyed,

What should become of you and all of yours,

Estates and honors and posterities,
Being to such hands delivered.

Burghley. Nay, but these
In no such wise can be conveyed away

By personal will, but by successive right
Still must descend in heritage of law.

Whereto your own words witness, saying if this

Were blown abroad your cause were utterly

Lost in all hearts of English friends.
Therein

Your thoughts hit right: for here in all men's minds

That are not mad with envying at the truth,

Death were no loathlier than a stranger king.

If you would any more, speak: if not aught,

This cause is ended.

Mary Stuart. I require again

Before a full and open parliament

Hearing, or speech in person with the queen,

Who shall, I hope, have of a queen regard,

And with the council. So, in trust hereof,

I crave a word with some of you apart,
And of this main assembly take farewell.

ACT. IV. — ELIZABETH.

SCENE I. — RICHMOND.

WALSINGHAM and DAVISON.

Walsingham. It is God's wrath, too sure, that holds her hand;

His plague upon this people, to preserve

By her sole mean her deadliest enemy, known

By proof more potent than approval of law

In all points guilty, but on more than all

Toward all this country dangerous. To take off

From the court held last month at Fotheringay

Authority with so full commission given

To pass upon her judgment — suddenly
Cut short by message of some three

lines writ

With hurrying hand at midnight, and
despatched
To main its work upon the second
day,—

What else may this be in so wise a
queen
But madness, as a brand to sear the
brain

Of one by God infatuate? yea, and
now

That she receives the French ambas-
sador

With one more special envoy from his
king,

Except their message touch her spleen
with fire,

And so undo itself, we cannot tell
What doubt may work upon her. Had
we but

Some sign more evident of some private
seal

Confirming toward her by more per-
sonal proof

The Scottish queen's inveteracy, for
this

As for our country plucked from immi-
nent death

We might thank God; but with such
gracious words

Of piteous challenge and imperial
plea

She hath wrought by letter on our mis-
tress' mind,

We may not think her judgment so
could slip,

Borne down with passion or forgetful-
ness,

As to leave bare her bitter root of
heart

And core of evil will there laboring.
Davison. Yet

I see no shade of other surety cast
From any sign of likelihood. It were

Not shameful more than dangerous,
though she bade,

To have her prisoner privily made
away;

Yet stands the queen's heart well-nigh
fixed hereon

When aught may seem to fix it; then
as fast

Wavers, but veers to that bad point
again

Whence blowing the wind blows down
her honor, nor
Brings surety of life with fame's destruc-
tion.

Walsingham. Ay,
We are no Catholic keepers, and his
charge

Need fear no poison in our watch-dog's
fang,

Though he show honest teeth at her, to
threat

Thieves' hands with loyal danger.

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, *attended by*
BURGHLEY, LEICESTER, HUNSDON,
HATTON, *and others of the Council.*

Elizabeth. No, my lords,
We are not so weak of wit as men that
need

Be counselled of their enemies. Blame
us not

That we accuse your friendship on this
cause

Of too much fearfulness: France we
will hear;

Nor doubt but France shall hear us all
as loud

As friend or foe may threaten or pro-
test,

Of our own heart advised, and resolute
more

Than hearts that need men's counsel.
Bid them in.

Enter CHÂTEAUNEUF *and* BELLÈVRE,
attended

From our fair cousin of France what
message, sirs?

Bellèvre. I, madam, have in special
charge to lay

The king's mind open to your majesty,
Which gives my tongue first leave of
speech more free

Than from a common envoy. Sure it
is,

No man more grieves at what his heart
abhors,

The counsels of your highness' ene-
mies,

Than doth the king of France: whereir
how far

The queen your prisoner have borne
part, or may

Seem of their works partaker, he can
judge

Naught: but much less the king may understand
 What men may stand accusers, who rise up
 Judge in so great a matter. Men of law
 May lay their charges on a subject. but
 The queen of Scotland, dowager queen
 of France,
 And sister made by wedlock to the king,
 To none being subject, can be judged
 of none
 Without such violence done on rule as
 breaks
 Prerogative of princes. Nor may man
 That looks upon your present majesty
 In such clear wise apparent, and retains
 Remembrance of your name through all
 the world
 For virtuous wisdom, bring his mind to
 think
 That England's royal-souled Elizabeth,
 Being set so high in fame, can so forget
 Wise Plato's word, that common souls
 are wrought
 Out of dull iron and slow lead, but
 kings
 Of gold untempered with so vile alloy
 As makes all metal up of meaner men
 But say this were not thus, and all men's
 awe
 Were from all time toward kingship
 merely vain,
 And state no more worth reverence, yet
 the plea
 Were naught which here your ministers
 pretend,
 That while the queen of Scots lives you
 may live
 No day that knows not danger. Were
 she dead,
 Rather might then your peril wax indeed
 To shape and sense of heavier portent,
 whom
 The Catholic states now threat not, nor
 your land,
 For this queen's love, but rather for
 their faith's,
 Whose cause, were she by violent hand
 removed,
 Could be but furthered, and its enter-
 prise
 Put on more strong and prosperous pre-
 text; yea,

You shall but draw the invasion on this
 land
 Whose threat you so may think to stay
 and bring
 Imminence down of inroad. Thus far
 forth
 The queen of Scots hath for your person
 been
 Even as a targe or buckler which has
 caught
 All intercepted shafts against your
 state
 Shot, or a stone held fast within your
 hand,
 Which, if you cast it thence in fear or
 wrath
 To smite your adversary, is cast away,
 And no mean left therein for menace.
 If
 You lay but hand upon her life, albeit
 There were that counselled this, her
 death will make
 Your enemies weapons of their own
 despair
 And give their whetted wrath excuse and
 edge
 More plausibly to strike more peril-
 ously.
 Your grace is known for strong in fore-
 sight; we
 These nineteen years of your wise reign
 have kept
 Fast watch in France upon you: of
 those claims
 Which lineally this queen here prisoner
 may
 Put forth on your succession have you
 made
 The stoutest rampire of your rule: and
 this
 Is grown a by-word with us, that their
 cause
 Who shift the base whereon their poli-
 cies lean
 Bows down toward ruin: and of loyal
 heart
 This will I tell you, madam, which hath
 been
 Given me for truth assured of one whose
 place
 Affirms him honorable, how openly
 A certain prince's minister that well
 May stand in your suspicion says abroad

That for his master's greatness it were
 good
 The queen of Scots were lost already,
 seeing
 He is well assured the Catholics here
 should then
 All wholly range them on his master's
 part.
 Thus long hath reigned your highness
 happily,
 Who have loved fair temperance more
 than violence: now,
 While honor bids have mercy, wisdom
 holds
 Equal at least the scales of interest.
 Think
 What name shall yours be found in time
 far hence,
 Even as you deal with her that in your
 hand
 Lies not more subject than your fame to
 come
 In men's repute that shall be. Bid her
 live,
 And ever shall my lord stand bound to
 you,
 And you forever firm in praise of men.
Elizabeth. I am sorry, sir, you are
 hither come from France
 Upon no better errand. I appeal
 To God for judge between my cause and
 hers
 Whom here you stand for. In this
 realm of mine
 The queen of Scots sought shelter, and
 therein
 Hath never found but kindness; for
 which grace
 In recompense she hath three times
 sought my life.
 No grief that on this head yet ever fell
 Shook ever from mine eyes so many a
 tear
 As this last plot upon it. I have read
 As deep, I doubt me, in as many books
 As any queen or prince in Christendom,
 Yet never chanced on aught so strange
 and sad
 As this my state's calamity. Mine own
 life
 Is by mere nature precious to myself,
 And in mine own realm I can live not
 safe.

I am a poor lone woman, girt about
 With secret enemies that perpetually
 Lay wait for me to kill me. From your
 king
 Why have not I my traitor to my hands
 Delivered up, who now this second time
 Hath sought to slay me, Morgan? On
 my part,
 Had mine own cousin Hunsdon here
 conspired
 Against the French king's life, he had
 found not so
 Refuge of me, nor even for kindred's
 sake
 From the edge of law protection; and
 this cause
 Needs present evidence of this man's
 mouth.
Bellèvre. Madam, there stand against
 the queen of Scots
 Already here in England on this charge
 So many and they so dangerous wit-
 nesses,
 No need can be to bring one over more:
 Nor can the king show such unnatural
 heart
 As to send hither a knife for enemies'
 hands
 To cut his sister's throat. Most
 earnestly
 My lord expects your resolution; which
 If we receive as given against his
 plea,
 I must crave leave to part for Paris
 hence.
 Yet give me pardon first if yet once
 more
 I pray your highness be assured, and so
 Take heed in season, you shall find this
 queen
 More dangerous dead than living.
 Spare her life,
 And not my lord alone, but all that
 reign,
 Shall be your sureties in all Christian
 lands
 Against all scathe of all conspiracies
 Made on her party; while such reme-
 dies' ends
 As physic states with bloodshedding, to
 cure
 Danger by death, bring fresh calami-
 ties

Far oftener forth than the old are healed
of them

Which so men thought to medicine. To
refrain

From that red-handed way of rule, and
set

Justice no higher than mercy sits beside,
Is the first mean of kings' prosperity
That would reign long; nor will my lord
believe

Your highness could put off yourself so
much

As to reverse and tread upon the law
That you thus long have kept and hon-
orably:

But should' this perilous purpose hold
right on,

I am bounden by my charge to say, the
king

Will not regard as liable to your laws
A queen's imperial person, nor will hold
Her death as but the general wrong of
kings,

And no more his than as his brethren's
all,

But as his own and special injury done,
More than to these injurious.

Elizabeth. Doth your lord
Bid you speak thus?

Bellèvere. Ay, madam: from his
mouth

Had I command what speech to use.

Elizabeth. You have done
Better to speak than he to send it. Sir,
You shall not presently depart this land
As one denied of mere discourtesy.

I will return an envoy of mine own
To speak for me at Paris with the king.
You shall bear back a letter from my
hand,

And give your lord assurance, having
seen,

I cannot be so frightened with men's
threats

That they shall not much rather move
my mind

To quicken than to slack the righteous
doom

Which none must think by menace to
put back,

Or daunt it with defiance. Sirs, good
day. [*Exeunt Ambassadors.*]

I were as one belated with false lights

If I should think to steer my darkglia
way

By twilight furtherance of their wiles
and words.

Think you, my lords, France yet would
have her live?

Burghley. If there be other than the
apparent end

Hid in this mission to your majesty,
Mine envoys can by no means fathom
it,

Who deal for me at Paris: fear of
Spain

Lays double hand as 'twere upon the
king,

Lest by removal of the queen of Scots
A way be made for peril in the claim

More potent then of Philip; and if
there come

From his Farnese note of enterprise
Or danger this way tending, France will
yet

Cleave to your friendship though his
sister die.

Elizabeth. So, in your mind, this half-
souled brother would

Steer any way that might keep safe his
sail

Against a southern wind, which here,
he thinks,

Her death might strengthen from the
north again

To blow against him off our subject
straits,

Made servile then and Spanish? Yet
perchance

There swells behind our seas a heart
too high

To bow more easily down, and bring
this land

More humbly to such handling, than
their waves

Bow down to ships of strangers, or their
storms

To breath of any lord on earth but God.
What thinks our cousin?

Hunsdon. That if Spain or France
Or both be stronger than the heart in
us

Which beats to battle ere they menace,
why,

In God's name, let them rise and make
their prey

Of what was England; but if neither
be, —

The smooth-cheeked French man-har-
lot, nor that hand

Which help to light Rome's fires with
English limbs, —

Let us not keep, to make their weakness
strong,

A pestilence here alive in England,
which

Gives force to their faint enmities, and
burns

Half the heart out of loyal trust and hope
With heat that kindles treason.

Elizabeth. By this light,
I have heard worse counsel from a wise
man's tongue

Than this clear note of forthright sol-
diership.

How say you, Dudley, to it?

Leicester. Madam, ere this
You have had my mind upon the matter,
writ

But late from Holland, that no public
stroke

Should fall upon this princess, who may
be

By privy death more happily removed
Without impeach of majesty, nor leave
A sign against your judgment, to call
down

Blame of strange kings for wrong to
kinship wrought
Though right were done to justice.

Elizabeth. Of your love
We know it is that comes this counsel;
nor,

Had we such friends of all our servants,
need

Our mind be now distraught with dan-
gerous doubts

That find no screen from dangers. Yet
meseems

One doubt stands now removed, if doubt
there were

Of aught from Scotland ever: Walsing-
ham,

You should have there intelligence
whereof

To make these lords with us partakers.

Walsingham. Nay,
Madam, no more than from a trustless
hand

Protest and promise: of those twain
that come

Hot on these Frenchmen's heels in
embassy,

He that in counsel on this cause was
late

One with my lord of Leicester now, to
rid

By draught of secret death this queen
away,

Bears charge to say as these gone hence
have said

In open audience, but by personal note
Hath given me this to know, that how-
soever

His king indeed desire her life be spared,
Much may be wrought upon him, would
your grace

More richly line his ragged wants with
gold,

And by full utterance of your parlia-
ment

Approve him heir in England.

Elizabeth. Ay! no more?

God's blood! what grace is proffered us
at need,

And on what mild conditions! Say I
will not

Redeem such perils at so dear a price,
Shall not our pensioner too join hands
with France,

And pay my gold with iron barter back
At edge of sword he dares not look
upon,

They tell us, for the scathe and scare he
took

Even in this woman's womb when shot
and steel

Undid the manhood in his veins unborn,
And left his tongue's threats hand-
less?

Walsingham. Men there be,
Your majesty must think, who bear but
ill,

For pride of country and high-hearted-
ness,

To see the king they serve your servant
so

That not his mother's life and once their
queen's

Being at such point of peril can enforce
One warlike word of his, for chance of
war

Conditional against you. Word came late
 From Edinburgh, that there the citizens
 With hoot and hiss had bayed him
 through the streets
 As he went heartless by; of whom they
 had heard
 This published saying, that in his per-
 sonal mind
 The blood of kindred or affinity
 So much not binds us as the friendship
 pledged
 To them that are not of our blood: and
 this
 Stands clear for certain, that no breath
 of war
 Shall breathe from him against us
 though she die,
 Except his titular claim be reft from him
 On our succession; and that all his
 mind
 Is but to reign unpartnered with a
 power
 Which should weigh down that half his
 kingdom's weight
 Left to his hand's share nominally in
 hold.
 And for his mother, this would he
 desire,
 That she were kept from this day to her
 death
 Close prisoner in one chamber, never
 more
 To speak with man or woman; and
 hereon
 That proclamation should be made of
 her
 As of one subject formally declared
 To the English law whereby, if she
 offend
 Again with iterance of conspiracy,
 She shall not as a queen again be tried,
 But as your vassal and a private head
 Live liable to the doom and stroke of
 death.
Elizabeth. She is bounden to him as
 he long since to her,
 Who would have given his kingdom up
 at least
 To his dead father's slayer; in whose
 red hand
 How safe had lain his life too, doubt
 may guess,

Which yet kept dark her purpose then
 on him,
 Dark now no more to us-ward. Think
 you then
 That they belie him, whose suspicion
 saith
 His ear and heart are yet inclined to
 Spain,
 If from that brother-in-law that was
 of ours,
 And would have been our bridegroom,
 he may win
 Help of strange gold and foreign sol-
 diership,
 With Scottish furtherance of those
 Catholic lords
 Who are stronger-spirited in their faith
 than ours,
 Being harried more of heretics, as they
 say,
 Than these within our borders, to root
 out
 The creed there stablished now, and do
 to death
 Its ministers, with all the lords their
 friends,
 Lay hands on all strong places there,
 and rule
 As prince upon their party? since he
 fain
 From ours would be divided, and cast
 in
 His lot with Rome against us too, from
 these
 Might he but earn assurance of their
 faith,
 Revolting from his own. May these
 things be
 More than mere muttering breath of
 trustless lies,
 And half his heart yet hover toward our
 side
 For all such hope or purpose?
Walsingham. Of his heart
 We know not, madam, surely; nor
 doth he
 Who follows fast on their first envoy
 sent,
 And writes to excuse him of his mes-
 sage here
 On her behalf apparent, but in sooth
 Aimed otherwise; the Master I mean
 of Gray,

Who swears me here by letter, if he be
not

True to the queen of England, he is
content

To have his head fall on a scaffold:
saying,

To put from him this charge of em-
bassy

Had been his ruin, but the meaning of
it

Is modest and not menacing; whereto
If you will yield not yet to spare the
life

So near its forfeit now, he thinks it
well

You should be pleased by some com-
mission given

To stay by the way his comrade and
himself,

Or bid them back.

Elizabeth. What man is this, then,
sent

With such a knave to fellow?

Walsingham. No such knave,
But still your prisoner's friend of old
time found, —

Sir Robert Melville.

Elizabeth. And an honest man
As faith might wish her servants; but
what pledge

Will these produce me for security
That I may spare this dangerous life,
and live

Unscathed of after practice?

Walsingham. As I think,
The king's self and his whole nobility
Will be her personal pledges; and her
son,

If England yield her to his hand in
charge,

On no less strait a bond will undertake
For her safe keeping.

Elizabeth. That were even to arm
With double power mine adversary,
and make him

The stronger by my hand to do me
hurt —

Were he mine adversary indeed: which
yet

I will not hold him. Let them find a
mean

For me to live unhurt, and save her
life,

It shall well please me. Say this king
of Scots

Himself would give his own inheritance
up

Pretended in succession, if but once
Her hand were found, or any friend's of
hers,

Again put forth upon me for her sake,
Why, haply so might hearts be satisfied
Of lords and commons then to let her
live.

But this I doubt he had rather take her
life

Himself than yield up to us for pledge;
and less,

These men shall know of me, I will
not take

In price of her redemption: which
were else,

And haply may in no wise not be held,
To this my loyal land and mine own
trust

A deadlier stroke and blast of sound
more dire

Than noise of fleets invasive.

Walsingham. Surely so
Would all hearts hold it, madam, in
that land

That are not enemies of the land and
yours;

For ere the doom had been proclaimed
an hour

Which gave to death your main foe's
head and theirs,

Yourself have heard what fire of joy
brake forth

From all your people; how their
church-towers all

Rang in with jubilant acclaim of bells
The day that bore such tidings, and the
night

That laughed aloud with lightning of
their joy

And thundered round its triumph:
twice twelve hours

This tempest of thanksgiving roared
and shone

Sheer from the Solway's to the Chan-
nel's foam

With light as from one festal-flaming
hearth

And sound as of one trumpet; not a
tongue

But praised God for it, or heart that
leapt not up,
Save of your traitors and their coun-
try's: these
Withered at heart and shrank their
heads in close,
As though the bright sun's were a bas-
ilisk's eye,
And light, that gave all others comfort,
flame
And smoke to theirs of hell's own dark-
ness, whence
Such eyes were blinded or put out with
fire.

Elizabeth. Yea, I myself, I mind me,
might not sleep
Those twice twelve hours thou speak'st
of. By God's light,
Be it most in love of me or fear of her
I know not, but my people seems in
sooth
Hot and an hungered on this trail of
hers:
Nor is it a people bloody-minded, used
To lap the life up of an enemy's vein
Who bleeds to death unweaponed: our
good hounds
Will course a quarry soldier-like in war,
But rage not hangman-like upon the
prey,
To flesh their fangs on limbs that strive
not: yet
Their hearts are hotter on this course
than mine,
Which most was deadliest aimed at.

Walsingham. Even for that
How should not theirs be hot as fire
from hell
To burn your danger up, and slay that
soul
Alive that seeks it? Thinks your maj-
esty
There beats a heart where treason hath
not turned
All English blood to poison, which
would feel
No deadlier pang of dread more death-
ful to it
To hear of yours endangered than to
feel
A sword against its own life bent, or
know
Death imminent as darkness overhead

That takes the noon from one man's
darkening eye
As must your death from all this peo-
ple's? You
Are very England: in your light of life
This living land of yours walks only
safe,
And all this breathing people with your
breath
Breathes unenslaved, and draws at each
pulse in
Freedom: your eye is light of theirs,
your word
As God's to comfort England, whose
whole soul
Is made with yours one, and her wit-
ness you
That Rome or hell shall take not hold
on her
Again till God be wroth with us so
much
As to reclaim for heaven the star that
yet
Lights all your land that looks on it,
and gives
Assurance higher than danger dares
assail
Save in this lady's name and service,
who

Must now from you take judgment.
Elizabeth. Must! by God,
I know not *must* but as a word of mine,
My tongue's and not mine ear's famil-
iar. Sirs,
Content yourselves to know this much
of us,
Or having known remember, that we
sent
The lord of Buckhurst and our servant
Beale
To acquaint this queen our prisoner
with the doom
Confirmed on second trial against her;
saying
Her word can weigh not down the
weightier guilt
Approved upon her, and by parliament
Since fortified with sentence. Yea,
my lords,
Ye should forget not how by message
then
I bade her know of me with what
strong force

A strenuous and invincible argument
I am urged to hold no more in such
delay

The process of her execution, being
The seed-plot of these late conspiracies,
Their author and chief motive; and am
told

That if I yield not, mine the guilt must
be

In God's and in the whole world's suf-
fering sight

Of all the miseries and calamities
To ensue on my refusal: whence, albeit
I know not yet how God shall please to
incline

My heart on that behalf, I have thought
it meet

In conscience yet that she should be
forewarned,

That so she might bethink her of her
sins

Done both toward God offensive and
to me,

And pray for grace to be true penitent
For all these faults: which, had the
main fault reached

No farther than mine own poor person,
God

Stands witness with what truth my heart
protests

I freely would have pardoned. She to
this

Makes bitter answer as of desperate
heart,

All we may wreak our worst upon her;
whom

Having to death condemned, we may
fulfil

Our wicked work, and God in paradise
With just atonement shall requite her.
This

Ye see is all the pardon she will ask,
Being only, and even as 'twere with
prayer, desired

To crave of us forgiveness; and there-
on

Being by Lord Buckhurst charged on
this point home,

That by her mean the Catholics here
had learnt

To hold her for their sovereign, — on
which cause

Nor my religion nor myself might live

Uncharged with danger while her life
should last, —

She answering gives God thanks aloud
to be

Held of so great account upon his side,
And in God's cause and in the Church
of God's

Rejoicingly makes offering of her life;
Which I, God knows how unrejoicingly,
Can scarce, ye tell me, choose but take,
or yield

At least for you to take it. Yet, being
told

It is not for religion she must die,
But for a plot by compass of her own
Laid to dethrone me and destroy, she
casts

Again this answer barbed with mockery
back, —

She was not so presumptuous born, to
aspire

To two such ends yet ever: yea, so far
She dwelt from such desire removed in
heart,

She would not have me suffer by her
will

The fillip of a finger; though herself
Be persecuted even as David once,
And her mishap be that she cannot so
Fly by the window forth as David:
whence

It seems she likens us to Saul, and looks
Haply to see us as on Mount Gilboa
fallen,

Where yet, for all the shooters on her
side,

Our shield shall be not vilely cast away,
As of one unanointed. Yet, my lords,
If England might but by my death
attain

A state more flourishing with a better
prince,

Gladly would I lay down my life; who
have

No care save only for my people's sake
To keep it: for myself, in all the world
I see no great cause why for all this coil
I should be fond to live or fear to die.

If I should say unto you that I mean
To grant not your petition, by my faith,
More should I so say haply than I mean:
Or should I say I mean to grant it, this
Were, as I think, to tell you of my mind

More than is fit for you to know: and
thus

I must for all petitionary prayer
Deliver you an answer answerless.

Yet will I pray God lighten my dark
mind,

That being illumined it may thence fore-
see

What for his church and all this com-
monwealth

May most be profitable: and this once
known,

My hand shall halt not long behind his
will.

SCENE II. — FOTHERINGAY

SIR AMYAS PAULET *and* SIR DREW
DRURY.

Paulet. I never gave God heartier
thanks than these

I give to have you partner of my charge
Now most of all, these letters being to
you

No less designed than me, and you in
heart

One with mine own upon them. Cer-
tainly,

When I put hand to pen this morning
past,

That master Davison by mine evidence
Might note what sore disquietudes I
had

To increase my griefs before of body
and mind,

I looked for no such word to cut off
mine

As these to us both of Walsingham's
and his.

Would rather yet I had cause to still
complain

Of those unanswered letters two months
past,

Than thus be certified of such intents
As God best knoweth I never sought to
know,

Or search out secret causes: though to
hear

Nothing at all did breed, as I confessed,
In me some hard conceits against my-
self,

I had rather yet rest ignorant than
ashamed

Of such ungracious knowledge. This
shall be

Fruit as I think of dread wrought on the
queen

By those seditious rumors whose report
Blows fear among the people lest our
charge

Escape our trust, or, as they term it now,
Be taken away, — such apprehensive
tongues

So phrase it, — and her freedom strike
men's hearts

More deep than all these flying fears
that say

London is fired of Papists, or the Scots
Have crossed in arms the Border, or
the north

Is risen again rebellious, or the Guise
Is disembarked in Sussex, or that now
In Milford Haven rides a Spanish
fleet, —

All which, albeit but footless floating
lies,

May all too easily smite and work too
far

Even on the heart most royal in the
world

That ever was a woman's.

Drury. Good my friend,
These noises come without a thunder-
bolt

In such dense air of dusk expectancy
As all this land lies under; nor will
some

Doubt or think much to say of those
reports,

They are broached and vented of men's
credulous mouths

Whose ears have caught them from such
lips as meant

Merely to strike more terror in the
queen,

And wring that warrant from her hover-
ing hand

Which falters yet and flutters on her lip
While the hand hangs and trembles
half advanced

Upon that sentence which, the treas-
urer said,

Should well ere this have spoken, see
ing it was

More than a full month old and four
days more

When he so looked to hear the word of
it

Which yet lies sealed of silence.

Paulet. Will you say,
Or any as wise and loyal, say or think
It was but for a show, to scare men's
wits,
They have raised this hue and cry upon
her flight

Supposed from hence, to waken Exeter
With noise from Honiton and Sampfield
spread

Of proclamation to detain all ships,
And lay all highways for her day and
night,

And send like precepts out four manner
of ways

From town to town, to make in readi-
ness

Their armor and artillery, with all speed,
On pain of death, for London by report
Was set on fire? though, God be there-
fore praised,

We know this is not, yet the noise hereof
Were surely not to be neglected, see-
ing

There is, meseems, indeed no readier
way

To levy forces for the achieving that
Which so these lewd reporters feign to
fear.

Drury. Why, in such mighty matters
and such mists

Wise men may think what hardly fools
would say,

And eyes get glimpse of more than sight
hath leave

To give commission for the babbling
tongue

Aloud to cry they have seen. This noise
that was

Upon one Arden's flight, a traitor,
whence

Fear flew last week all round us, gave
but note

Ifow lightly may men's minds take fire,
and words

Take wing that have no feet to fare
upon

More solid than a shadow.

Paulet. Nay, he was
Escaped indeed: and every day thus
brings

Forth its new mischief; as this last
month did

Those treasons of the French ambas-
sador

Designed against our mistress, which
God's grace

Laid by the knave's mean bare to whom
they sought

For one to slay her, and of the Pope's
hand earn

Ten thousand blood-incrusted crowns a
year

To his most hellish hire. You will not
say

This too was merely fraud or vision
wrought

By fear or cloudy falsehood?

Drury. I will say

No more or surelier than I know: and
this

I know not thoroughly to the core of
truth

Or heart of falsehood in it. A man may
lie

Merely, or trim some bald lean truth
with lies,

Or patch bare falsehood with some tat-
ter of truth,

And each of these pass current: but of
these

Which likeliest may this man's tale be
who gave

Word of his own temptation by these
French

To hire them such a murderer, and
avowed

He held it godly cunning to comply,
And bring this envoy's secretary to
sight

Of one clapped up for debts in New-
gate, who

Being thence released might readily, as
he said,

Even by such means as once this lady's
lord

Was made away with, make the queen
away

With powder fired beneath her bed—
why, this,

Good sooth, I guess not; but I doubt
the man

To be more liar than fool, and yet, God
wot,

More fool than traitor; most of all in-
 tent
 To conjure coin forth of the French-
 man's purse
 With tricks of mere effontery: thus at
 least
 We know did Walsingham esteem of
 him:
 And if by Davison held of more ac-
 count,
 Or merely found more serviceable, and
 made
 A mean to tether up those quick French
 tongues
 From threat or pleading for this pris-
 oner's life,
 I cannot tell, and care not. Though
 the queen
 Hath stayed this envoy's secretary from
 flight
 Forth of the kingdom, and committed
 him
 To ward within the Tower while Châ-
 teauneuf
 Himself should come before a council
 held
 At my lord treasurer's, where being thus
 accused
 At first he cared not to confront the
 man,
 But stood upon his office, and the
 charge
 Of his king's honor and prerogative —
 Then bade bring forth the knave, who
 being brought forth
 Outfaced him with insistence front to
 front,
 And took the record of this whole tale's
 truth
 Upon his soul's damnation, challen-
 ging
 The Frenchman's answer in denial
 hereof,
 That of his own mouth had this witness
 been
 Traitorously tempted, and by personal
 plea
 Directly drawn to treason: which
 awhile
 Struck dumb the ambassador as amazed
 with wrath,
 Till presently, the accuser being re-
 moved,

He made avcwal this fellow some while
 since
 Had given his secretary to wit there la
 One bound in Newgate who being
 thence released
 Would take the queen's death on his
 hand: whereto
 Answering, he bade the knave avoid
 his house
 On pain, if once their ways should
 cross, to be
 Sent bound before the council: who
 replied
 He had done foul wrong to take no
 further note,
 But being made privy to this damned
 device
 Keep close its perilous knowledge;
 whence the queen
 Might well complain against him; and
 hereon
 They fell to wrangling on this cause,
 that he
 Professed himself to no man answer-
 able
 For declaration or for secret held
 Save his own master: so that now is
 gone
 Sir William Wade to Paris, not with
 charge
 To let the king there know this queen
 shall live,
 But to require the ambassador's recall,
 And swift delivery of our traitors there
 To present justice: yet may no man say,
 For all these half-faced scares and poli-
 cies,
 Here was more sooth than seeming.
Paullet. Why, these crafts
 Were shameful then as fear's most
 shameful self,
 If thus your wit read them aright; and
 we
 Should for our souls' and lives alike do
 ill
 To jeopard them on such men's surety
 given
 As make no more account of simple
 faith
 Than true men make of liars: and
 these are they,
 Our friends and masters, that rebuke
 us both

By speech late uttered of her majesty
 For lack of zeal in service and of care
 She looked for at our hands, in that we
 have not
 In all this time, unprompted, of our-
 selves
 Found out some way to cut this queen's
 life off,
 Seeing how great peril, while her ene-
 my lives,
 She is hourly subject unto; saying, she
 notes,
 Besides a kind of lack of love to her,
 Herein we have not that particular
 care
 Forsooth of our own safeties, or indeed
 Of the faith rather and the general
 good,
 That politic reason bids; especially,
 Having so strong a warrant and such
 ground
 For satisfaction of our consciences
 To Godward, and discharge of credit
 kept
 And reputation toward the world, as is
 That oath whereby we stand associated
 To prosecute inexorably to death
 Both with our joint and our particular
 force
 All by whose hand and all on whose
 behalf
 Our sovereign's life is struck at: as by
 proof
 Stands charged upon our prisoner.
 So they write,
 As though the queen's own will had
 warranted
 The words that by her will's authority
 Were blotted from the bond, whereby
 that head
 Was doomed on whose behoof her life
 should be
 By treason threatened: for she would
 not have
 Aught pass which grieved her subjects'
 consciences,
 She said, or might abide not openly
 The whole world's view: nor would she
 any one
 Were punished for another's fault: and
 so
 Cut off the plea whereon she now de-
 sires

That we should dip our secret hands in
 blood
 With no direction given of her own
 mouth
 So to pursue that dangerous head to
 death
 By whose assent her life were sought:
 for this
 Stands fixed for only warrant of such
 deed,
 And this we have not, but her word
 instead
 She takes it most unkindly toward her
 self
 That men professing toward her loyally
 That love that we do should in any
 sort,
 For lack of our own duty's full dis-
 charge,
 Cast upon her the burden, knowing as
 we
 Her slowness to shed blood, much more
 of one
 So near herself in blood as is this
 queen,
 And one with her in sex and quality.
 And these respects, they find, or so
 profess,
 Do greatly trouble her: who hath sun-
 dry times
 Protested, they assure us, earnestly,
 That if regard of her good subjects'
 risk
 Did not more move her than the per-
 sonal fear
 Of proper peril to her, she never would
 Be drawn to assent unto this blood-
 shedding:
 And so to our good judgments they
 refer
 These speeches they thought meet to
 acquaint us with
 As passed but lately from her majesty,
 And to God's guard commend us:
 which God knows
 We should much more need than de-
 serve of him
 Should we give ear to this, and as they
 bid
 Make heretics of these papers; which
 three times
 You see how Davison hath enforced
 on us:

But they shall taste no fire for me, nor
pass

Back to his hands till copies writ of
them

Lie safe in mine for sons of mine to
keep

In witness how their father dealt herein.

Drury. You have done the wiselier:
and what word soe'er

Shall bid them know your mind, I am
well assured

It well may speak for me too.

Paulet. Thus it shall:

That having here his letters in my
hands,

I would not fail, according to his
charge,

To send back answer with all possible
speed

Which shall deliver unto him my great
grief

And bitterness of mind, in that I am
So much unhappy as I hold myself

To have lived to look on this unhappy
day,

When I by plain direction am required
From my most gracious sovereign's

mouth to do

An act which God forbiddeth, and the
law.

Hers are my goods and livings, and my
life,

Held at her disposition, and myself
Am ready so to lose them this next

day

If it shall please her so, acknowledging
I hold them of her mere goodwill, and

do not

Desire them to enjoy them but so long
As her great grace gives leave: but

God forbid

That I should make for any grace of
hers

So foul a shipwreck of my conscience,
or

Leave ever to my poor posterity
So great a blot, as privily to shed blood

With neither law nor warrant. So, in
trust

That she, of her accustomed clemency,
Will take my dutiful answer in good

part,

By his good mediation, as returned

From one who never will be less in
love,

Honor, obedience, duty to his queen,
Than any Christian subject living, thus
To God's grace I commit him.

Drury. Though I doubt

She haply shall be much more wroth
hereat

Than lately she was gracious, when she
bade

God treblefold reward you for your
charge

So well discharged, saluting you by
name

Most faithful and most careful, you
shall do

Most like a wise man loyally to write
But such good words as these, whereto

myself

Subscribe in heart: though being not
named herein

(Albeit to both seem these late letters
meant)

Nor this directed to me, I forbear
To make particular answer. And in-

deed,

Were danger less apparent in her life
To the heart's life of all this living

land,

I would this woman might not die at
all

By secret stroke nor open sentence.

Paulet. I

Will praise God's mercy most for this
of all,

When I shall see the murderous cause
removed

Of its most mortal peril: nor desire
A guerdon ampler from the queen we

serve,

Besides her commendations of my faith
For spotless actions and for safe re-

gards,

Than to see judgment on her enemy
done;

Which were for me that recompense
indeed

Whereof she writes as one not given
to all,

But for such merit reserved to crown its
claim

Above all common service: nor save
this

Could any treasure's promise in the
world

So ease those travails and rejoice this
heart

That hers too much takes thought of,
as to read

Her charge to carry for her sake in it
This most just thought, that she can
balance not

The value that her grace doth prize me
at

In any weight of judgment: yet it were
A word to me more comfortable at heart
Than these, though these most gracious,
that should speak

Death to her death's contriver.

Drury. Nay, myself

Were fain to see this coil wound up,
and her

Removed that makes it: yet such things
will pluck

I rd at men's hearts that think on
them, and move

Compassion that such long strange
years should find

So strange an end: nor shall men ever
say

But she was born right royal; full of
sins,

It may be, and by circumstance or choice
Dyed and defaced with bloody stains
and black,

Unmerciful, unfaithful, but of heart
So fiery high, so swift of spirit and clear,
In extreme danger and pain so lifted up,
So of all violent things inviolable,
So large of courage, so superb of soul,
So sheathed with iron mind invincible
And arms unbreached of fireproof con-
stancy, —

By shame not shaken, fear or force or
death,

Change, or all confluence of calami-
ties, —

And so at her worst need beloved, and
still,

Naked of help and honor when she
seemed,

As other women would be, and of hope
Stripped, still so of herself adorable
By minds not always all ignobly mad
Nor all made poisonous with false grain
of faith,

She shall be a world's wonder to all
time,

A deadly glory watched of marvelling
men

Not without praise, not without noble
tears,

And if without what she would never
have

Who had it never, — pity, — yet from
none

Quite without reverence and some kind
of love

For that which was so royal. Yea, and
now

That at her prayer we here attend on
her,

If, as I think, she have in mind to
send

Aught written to the queen, what we
may do

To further her desire shall on my part
Gladly be done, so be it the grace she
craves

Be naught akin to danger.

Paulet. It shall be

The first of all, then, craved by her of
man,

Or by man's service done her, that was
found

So harmless ever.

Enter MARY STUART *and* MARY BEA-
TON.

Mary Stuart. Sirs, in time past by
I was desirous many times, ye know,
To have written to your queen: but
since I have had

Advertisement of my conviction, seeing
I may not look for life, my soul is set
On preparation for another world:

Yet none the less, not for desire of life,
But for my conscience's discharge and
rest,

And for my last farewell, I have at
heart

By you to send her a memorial writ
Of somewhat that concerns myself,
when I

Shall presently be gone out of this world.
And to remove from her, if such be
there,

Suspicion of all danger in receipt
Of this poor paper that shall come from
me,

Myself will take the assay of it, and so
With mine own hands to yours deliver
it.

Paulet. Will you not also, madam,
be content

To seal and close it in my presence up?

Mary Stuart. Sir, willingly; but I
beseech your word

Pledged for its safe delivery to the
queen.

Paulet. I plight my faith it shall be
sent to her.

Mary Stuart. This further promise I
desire, you will

Procure me from above certificate
It hath been there delivered.

Drury. This is more

Than we may stand so pledged for: in
our power

It is to send, but far beyond our power,
As being above our place, to promise
you

Certificate or warrant.

Mary Stuart. Yet I trust

Consideration may be had of me
After my death, as one derived in blood
From your queen's grandsire, with all
mortal rites

According with that faith I have pro-
fessed

All my life-days as I was born therein.

This is the sum of all mine askings:
whence

Well might I take it in ill part of you
To wish me seal my letter in your sight,
Bewraying your hard opinion of me.

Paulet. This

Your own words well might put into my
mind,

That so beside my expectation made
Proffer to take my first assay for me
Of the outer part of it: for you must
think

I was not ignorant that by sleight of craft
There might be as great danger so con-
veyed

Within the letter as without, and thus
I could not for ill thoughts of you be
blamed,

Concurring with you in this jealousy:
For had yourself not moved it of your-
self

Sir *Drew* nor I had ever thought on it.

Mary Stuart. The occasion why I
moved it was but this:

That having made my custom in time
past

To send sometimes some tokens to your
queen,

At one such time that I sent certain
clothes

One standing by advised her cause my
gifts

To be tried thoroughly ere she touched
them; which

I have since observed, and taken order
thus

With *Nau*, when last he tarried at the
court,

To do the like to a fur-fringed counter-
pane

Which at that time I sent: and as for
this,

Look what great danger lies between
these leaves

That I dare take and handle in my
hands,

And press against my face each part of
them

Held open thus, and either deadly side,
Wherein your fear smells death sown
privily.

Paulet. Madam, when so you charged
your secretary

Her majesty was far from doubt, I
think,

Or dream of such foul dealing; and I
would

Suspicion since had found no just cause
given,

And then things had not been as now
they are.

Mary Stuart. But things are as they
are, and here I stand

Convicted, and not knowing how many
hours

I have to live yet.

Paulet. Madam, you shall live
As many hours as God shall please; but
this

May be said truly, that you here have
been

Convicted in most honorable sort
And favorable.

Mary Stuart. What favor have I
found?

Paulet. Your cause hath been examined scrupulously
By many our eldest nobles of this realm,
Whereas by law you should but have been tried

By twelve men as a common person.

Mary Stuart. Nay,
Your noblemen must by their peers be tried.

Paulet. All strangers of what quality soe'er
In matter of crime are only to be tried
In other princes' territories by law
That in that realm bears rule.

Mary Stuart. You have your laws:
But other princes all will think of it
As they see cause; and mine own son is now

No more a child, but come to man's estate,
And he will think of these things bitterly.

Drury. Ingratitude, whate'er he think of them,
Is odious in all persons, but of all
In mightiest personages most specially
Most hateful: and it will not be denied
But that the queen's grace greatly hath deserved

Both of yourself and of your son.

Mary Stuart. What boon
Shall I acknowledge? Being in bonds,
I am set

Free from the world, and therefore am I not

Afraid to speak; I have had the favor here

To have been kept prisoner now these many years

Against my will and justice.

Paulet. Madam, this
Was a great favor, and without this grace

You had not lived to see these days.

Mary Stuart. How so?

Paulet. Seeing your own subjects did pursue you, and had
The best in your own country.

Mary Stuart. That is true,
Because your Mildmay's ill persuasions first

Made me discharge my forces, and then caused

Mine enemies to burn my friends' main holds,
Castles and houses.

Paulet. Howsoe'er, it was
By great men of that country that the queen

Had earnest suit made to her to have yourself

Delivered to them, which her grace denied,

And to their great misliking.

Drury. Seventeen years
She hath kept your life to save it; and whereas

She calls your highness sister, she hath dealt

In truth and deed most graciously with you

And sister like, in seeking to preserve
Your life at once and honor.

Mary Stuart. Ay! wherein?

Drury. In that commission of your causes held

At York, which was at instance of your friends

Dissolved to save your honor.

Mary Stuart. No: the cause
Why that commission was dissolved indeed

Was that my friends could not be heard to inform

Against my loud accusers.

Paulet. But your friend
The bishop's self of Ross, your very friend,

Hath written that this meeting was dismissed

All only in your favor; and his book
Is extant: and this favor is but one

Of many graces which her majesty
Hath for mere love extended to you.

Mary Stuart. This

Is one great favor, even to have kept me here

So many years against my will.

Paulet. It was

For your own safety, seeing your countrymen

Sought your destruction, and to that swift end

Required to have you yielded up to them,

As was before said.

Mary Stuart. Nay, then, I will speak.
I am not afraid. It was determined
here

That I should not depart; and when I
was

Demanded by my subjects, this I know,
That my lord treasurer with his own
close hand

Writ in a packet which by trustier
hands

Was intercepted, and to me conveyed,
To the earl of Murray, that the devil
was tied

Fast in a chain, and they could keep
her not,

But here she should be safely kept.

Drury. That earl

Was even as honorable a gentleman
As I knew ever in that country bred.

Mary Stuart. One of the worst men
of the world he was:

A foul adulterer, one of general lust,
A spoiler and a murderer.

Drury. Six weeks long,

As I remember, here I saw him; where
He bore him very gravely, and main-
tained

The reputation even on all men's
tongues

In all things of a noble gentleman:
Nor have I heard him evil spoken of
Till this time ever.

Mary Stuart. Yea, my rebels here
Are honest men, and by the queen
have been

Maintained.

Paulet. You greatly do forget your-
self

To charge her highness with so foul a
fault,

Which you can never find ability
To prove on her.

Mary Stuart. What did she with the
French,

I pray you, at Newhaven?

Paulet. It appears

You have conceived so hardly of the
queen

My mistress, that you still inveterately
Interpret all her actions to the worst,
Not knowing the truth of all the cause;
but yet

I dare assure you that her majesty

Had most just cause and righteous, in
respect

As well of Calais as for other ends,
To do the thing she did, and more to
have done,

Had it so pleased her to put forth her
power.

And this is in you great unthankfulness
After so many favors and so great,
Whereof you will acknowledge in no
wise

The least of any; though her majesty
Hath of her own grace merely saved
your life,

To the utter discontentment of the best
Your subjects once in open parliament,
Who craved against you justice on the
charge

Of civil law-breach and rebellion.

Mary Stuart. I

Know no such matter, but full well I
know

Sir Francis Walsingham hath openly,
Since his abiding last in Scotland, said
That I should rue his entertainment
there.

Paulet. Madam, you have not rued
it, but have been

More honorably entertained than ever
yet

Was any other crown's competitor
In any realm save only this: whereof
Some have been kept close prisoners,
other some

Maimed and unnaturally disfigured,
some

Murdered.

Mary Stuart. But I was no competi-
tor:

All I required was in successive right
To be reputed but as next the crown.

Paulet. Nay, madam, you went fur-
ther, when you gave

The English arms and style, as though
our queen

Had been but an usurper on your
right.

Mary Stuart. My husband and my
kinsmen did therein

What they thought good: I had naught
to do with it.

Paulet. Why would you not then
loyally renounce

Your claim herein pretended, but with
such
Condition, that you might be authorized
Next heir apparent to the crown?

Mary Stuart. I have made
At sundry times thereon good proffers,
which
Could never be accepted.

Paulet. Heretofore
It hath been proved unto you presently,
That in the very instant even of all
Your treaties and most friendlike of-
fers, were
Some dangerous crafts discovered.

Mary Stuart. You must think
I have some friends on earth; and if
they have done
Any thing privily, what is that to me?

Paulet. Madam, it was somewhat to
you, and I would
For your own sake you had forborne
it, that

After advertisement and conscience
given
Of Morgan's devilish practice, to have
killed

A sacred queen, you yet would enter-
tain
The murderer as your servant.

Mary Stuart. I might do it
With as good right as ever did your
queen

So entertain my rebels.

Drury. Be advised:
This speech is very hard, and all the
case
Here differs greatly.

Mary Stuart. Yea, let this then be:
Ye cannot yet of my conviction say
But I by partial judgment was con-
demned,
And the commissioners knew my son
could have
No right, were I convicted, and your
queen
Could have no children of her womb;
whereby

They might set up what man for king
they would.

Paulet. This is in you too great for-
getfulness
Of honor and yourself, to charge these
lords

With two so foul and horrible faults,
as first
To take your life by partial doom from
you,

And then bestow the kingdom where
they liked.

Mary Stuart. Well, all is one to me:
and for my part

I thank God I shall die without regret
Of any thing that I have done alive.

Paulet. I would entreat you yet be
sorry at least

For the great wrong and well-deserv-
ing grief

You have done the queen, my mistress.

Mary Stuart. Nay, thereon
Let others answer for themselves: I
have

Nothing to do with it. Have you borne
in mind

Those matters of my moneys that we
last

Conferred upon together?

Paulet. Madam, these
Are not forgotten.

Mary Stuart. Well it is if aught
Be yet at all remembered for my good
Have here my letter sealed and super-
scribed,

And so farewell — or even as here men
may.

[*Exeunt PAULET and DRURY.*
Had I that old strength in my weary
limbs

That in my heart yet fails not, fain
would I

Fare forth if not fare better. Tired
I am,

But not so lame in spirit I might not
take

Some comfort of the winter-wasted sun
This bitter Christmas to me, though
my feet

Were now no firmer nor more helpful
found

Than when I went but in my chair
abroad

Last weary June at Chartley. I can
stand

And go now without help of either
side,

And bend my hand again, thou seest
to write:

I did not well perchance in sight of
these

To have made so much of this lame
hand, which yet

God knows was grievous to me, and
to-day

To make my letter up and superscribe
And seal it with no outward show of
pain

Before their face and inquisition; yet
I care not much in player's wise pit-
tiously

To blind such eyes with feigning:
though this Drew

Be gentler and more gracious than his
mate,

And liker to be wrought on; but at last
What need have I of men?

Mary Beaton. What then you may,
I know not, seeing for all that was and is
We are yet not at the last; but when
you had,

You have hardly failed to find more
help of them

And heartier service than more pros-
perous queens

Exact of expectation: when your need
Was greater than your name or natural
state,

And wage was none to look for but of
death,

As though the expectancy thereof and
hope

Were more than man's prosperities,
men have given

Heart's thanks to have this gift of God
and you

For dear life's guerdon, even the trust
assured

To drink for you the bitterness of death.

Mary Stuart. Ay, one said once it
must be, — some one said

I must be perilous ever, and my love
More deadly than my will was evil or
good

Toward any of all these that through
me should die:

I know not who, nor when one said it;
but

I know too sure he lied not.

Mary Beaton. No; I think
This was a seer indeed. I have heard
of men

That under imminence of death grew
strong

With mortal foresight, yet in life-day,
past

Could see no foot before them, nor
provide

For their own fate or fortune any thing
Against one angry chance of accident
Or passionate fault of their own loves
or hates

That might to death betray them: such
an one

Thus haply might have prophesied, and
had

No strength to save himself.

Mary Stuart. I know not: yet
Time was when I remembered.

Mary Beaton. It should be
No enemy's saying whom you remem-
ber not;

You are wont not to forget your ene-
mies; yet

The word rang sadder than a friend's
should fall

Save in some strange pass of the spirit
or flesh

For love's sake haply hurt to death.

Mary Stuart. It seems
Thy mind is bent to know the name of
me,

That of myself I know not.

Mary Beaton. Nay, my mind
Has other thoughts to beat upon: for
me

It may suffice to know the saying for
true,

And never care who said it.

Mary Stuart. True? too sure,
God to mine heart's grief hath approved
it. See,

Nor Scot nor Englishman that takes on
him

The service of my sorrow, but partakes
The sorrow of my service; man by
man,

As that one said, they perish of me:
yea,

Were I a sword sent upon earth, or
plague

Bred of aerial poison, I could be
No deadlier where unwillingly I strike,
Who where I would can hurt not: Percy
died

By his own hand in prison, Howard by
law;
These young men with strange torments
done to death,
Who should have rid me and the world
of her
That is our scourge, and to the Church
of God
A pestilence that wastes it: all the
north
Wears yet the scars engraven of civil
steel
Since its last rising: nay, she saith but
right,
Mine enemy, saying by these her ser-
vile tongues
I have brought upon her land mine own
land's curse,
And a sword follows at my heel, and
fire
Is kindled of mine eyeshot. And be-
fore,
Whom did I love that died not of it?
Whom
That I would save might I deliver,
when
I had once but looked on him with love,
or pledged
Friendship? I should have died, I
think, long since,
That many might have died not, and
this word
Had not been written of me nor ful-
filled,
But perished in the saying, a prophecy
That took the prophet by the throat,
and slew —
As sure I think it slew him. Such a
song
Might my poor servant slain before my
face
Have sung before the stroke of violent
death
Had fallen upon him there for my sake.
Mary Beaton. Ah!
You think so? this remembrance was
it not
That hung and hovered in your mind
but now,
Moved your heart backward all unwit-
tingly
To some blind memory of the man long
dead?

Mary Stuart. In sooth, I think my
prophet should have been
David.
Mary Beaton. You thought of him?
Mary Stuart. An old sad thought:
The moan of it was made long since,
and he
Not unremembered.
Mary Beaton. Nay, of him indeed
Record was made, — a royal record:
whence
No marvel is it that you forgot not him.
Mary Stuart. I would forget no
friends nor enemies: these
More needs me now remember.
Think'st thou not
This woman hates me deadlier — or
this queen
That is not woman — than myself could
hate
Except I were as she in all things?
Then
I should love no such woman as am I
Much more than she may love me: yet
I am sure,
Or so near surety as all belief may be,
She dare not slay me for her soul's
sake; nay,
Though that were made as light of as
a leaf
Storm-shaken, in such stormy winds of
state
As blow between us like a blast of
death,
For her throne's sake she durst not,
which must be
Broken to build my scaffold. Yet, God
wot,
Perchance a straw's weight now cast in
by chance
Might weigh my life down in the scale
her hand
Holds hardly straight for trembling: if
she be
Woman at all, so tempered naturally
And with such spirit and sense as thou
and I,
Should I for wrath so far forget myself
As these men sometime charge me
that I do,
My tongue might strike my head off.
By this head
That yet I wear to swear by, if life be

Thankworthy, God might well be
thanked for this

Of me or whoso loves me in the world,
That I spake never half my heart out
yet,

For any sore temptation of them all,
To her or hers; nor ever put but once
My heart upon my paper, writing plain
The things I thought, heard, knew for
truth, of her,

Believed or feigned — nay, feigned not
to believe

Of her fierce follies fed with wry-
mouthed praise,

And that vain ravin of her sexless lust
Which could not feed nor hide its hun-
ger, curb

With patience nor allay with love the
thirst

That mocked itself as all mouths
mocked it. Ha!

What might the reading of these truths
have wrought

Within her maiden mind, what seed
have sown,

Trow'st thou, in her sweet spirit, of re-
venge

Toward me that showed her queenship,
in the glass

A subject's hand of hers had put in
mine,

The likeness of it loathed and laugh-
able

As they that worshipped it with words
and signs

Beheld her and bemocked her?

Mary Beaton. Certainly,
I think that soul drew never breath
alive

To whom this letter might seem par-
donable

Which timely you forbore to send her.

Mary Stuart. Nay,
I doubt not I did well to keep it back —
And did not ill to write it; for God
knows

It was no small ease to my heart.

Mary Beaton. But say
I had not burnt it as you bade me burn,
But kept it privily safe against a need
That I might haply some time have of
it?

Mary Stuart. What, to destroy me?

Mary Beaton. Hardly, sure, to save.

Mary Stuart. Why shouldst thou
think to bring me to my death?

Mary Beaton. Indeed, no man am I
that love you; nor
Need I go therefore in such fear of you
As of my mortal danger.

Mary Stuart. On my life,
(Long life or short, with gentle or vio-
lent end,

I know not, and would choose not,
though I might

So take God's office on me) one that
heard

Would swear thy speech had in it, and
subtly mixed,

A savor as of menace, or a sound
As of an imminent ill or perilous sense
Which was not in thy meaning.

Mary Beaton. No: in mine
There lurked no treason ever; nor have
you

Cause to think worse of me than loy-
ally,

If proof may be believed on witness.

Mary Stuart. Sure,
I think I have not, nor I should not
have:

Thy life has been the shadow cast of
mine,

A present faith to serve my present need,
A foot behind my footsteps; as long
since

In those French dances that we trod,
and laughed

The blithe way through together. Thou
couldst sing

Then, and a great while gone it is by
this

Since I heard song or music: I could
now

Find in my heart to bid thee, as the
Jews

Were once bid sing in their captivity
One of their songs of Sion, sing me now,
If one thou knowest, for love of that
far time,

One of our songs of Paris.

Mary Beaton. Give me leave
A little to cast up some wandering
words,

And gather back such memories as may
beat

About my mind of such a song, and yet
I think I might renew some note long
dumb

That once your ear allowed of. — I did
pray, [Aside.

Tempt me not, God: and by her mouth
again

He tempts me — nay, but prompts me,
being most just,

To know by trial if all remembrance be
Dead as remorse or pity that in birth
Died, and were childless in her: if she
quite

Forget that very swan-song of thy love,
My love that wast, my love that wouldst
not be,

Let God forget her now at last as I
Remember: if she think but one soft
thought,

Cast one poor word upon thee, God
thereby

Shall surely bid me let her live: if none,
I shoot that letter home, and sting her
dead.

God strengthen me to sing but these
words through,

Though I fall dumb at end forever.
Now — [She sings.

*Après tant de jours, après tant de pleurs,
Soyez secourable à mon âme en peine.*

*Voyez comme Avril fait l'amour aux
fleurs ;*

*Dame d'amour, dame aux belles couleurs,
Dieu vous a fait belle, Amour vous fait
reine.*

*Rions, je t'en prie ; aimons, je le veux.
Le temps fuit et rit et ne revient guère
Pour baiser le bout de tes blonds cheveux,
Pour baiser tes cils, ta bouche et tes yeux ;
L'amour n'a qu'un jour auprès de sa mère.*

Mary Stuart. Nay, I should once
have known that song, thou
say'st,

And him that sang it and should now be
dead:

Was it — but his rang sweeter — was it
not

Remy Belleau?

Mary Beaton (My letter — here at
heart!) [Aside.

I think it might be — were it better writ
And courtlier phrased, with Latin spice
cast in,

And a more tunable descant.

Mary Stuart. Ay; how sweet

Sang all the world about those stars
that sang

With Ronsard for the strong mid star
of all,

His bay-bound head all glorious with
gray hairs,

Who sang my birth and bridal! When
I think

Of those French years, I only seem to
see

A light of swords and singing, only hear
Laughter of love and lovely stress of
lutes,

And in between the passion of them
borne

Sound of swords crossing ever, as of
feet

Dancing, and life and death still equally
Blithe and bright-eyed from battle.

Haply now

My sometime sister, mad Queen Madge,
is grown

As grave as I should be, and wears at
waist

No hearts of last year's lovers any more
Enchased for jewels round her girdle-
stead,

But rather beads for penitence; yet I
doubt

Time should not more abash her heart
than mine,

Who live not heartless yet. These
days like those

Have power but for a season given to
do

No more upon our spirits than they may,
And what they may we know not till it
be

Done, and we need no more take thought
of it,

As I no more of death or life to-day.

Mary Beaton. That shall you surely
need not.

Mary Stuart. So I think,

Our keepers being departed; and by
these,

Even by the uncourtlier as the gentler
man,

I read as in a glass their queen's plain heart,
And that by her at last I shall not die.

SCENE III. — GREENWICH PALACE.
QUEEN ELIZABETH and DAVISON.

Elizabeth. Thou hast seen Lord Howard? I bade him send thee.

Davison. Madam,

But now he came upon me hard at hand,
And by your gracious message bade me in.

Elizabeth. The day is fair as April:
hast thou been

Abroad this morning? 'Tis no winter's sun

That makes these trees forget their nakedness,

And all the glittering ground, as 'twere in hope,

Breathe laughingly.

Davison. Indeed, the gracious air
Had drawn me forth into the park, and thence

Comes my best speed to attend upon your grace.

Elizabeth. My grace is not so gracious
as the sun

That graces thus the late distempered air;

And you should oftener use to walk abroad,

Sir, than your custom is: I would not have

Good servants heedless of their natural health

To do me sickly service. It were strange

That one twice bound as woman and as queen

To care for good men's lives and loyalties

Should prove herself toward either dangerous.

Davison. That

Can be no part of any servant's fear
Who lives for service of your majesty.

Elizabeth. I would not have it be, —
God else forbid! —

Who have so loyal servants as I hold
All now that bide about me; for I will not

Think, though such villany once were
in men's minds,

That twice among mine English gentlemen

Shall hearts be found so foul as theirs
who thought,

When I was horsed for hunting, to waylay

And shoot me through the back at unawares

With poisoned bullets; nor, thou knowest, would I,

When this was opened to me, take such care,

Ride so fenced round about with iron guard,

Or walk so warily as men counselled me
For loyal fear of what thereafter might

More prosperously be plotted: nay,
God knows,

I would not hold on such poor terms
my life,

With such a charge upon it, as to breathe

In dread of death or treason till the day
That they should stop my trembling

breath, and ease
The piteous heart that panted like a

slave's
Of all vile fear forever. So to live

Were so much hatefuller than thus to die,

I do not think that man or woman draws
Base breath of life the loathsomest on

earth
Who by such purchase of perpetual fear

And deathless doubt of all in trust of
none

Would shudderingly prolong it.

Davison. Even too well

Your servants know that greatness of
your heart

Which gives you yet unguarded to men's
eyes;

And were unworthier found to serve or
live

Than is the unworthiest of them, did not
this

Make all their own hearts hotter with
desire

To be the bulwark or the price of yours
Paid to redeem it from the arrest of
death.

Elizabeth. So haply should they be
whose hearts beat true
With loyal blood; but whoso says they
are
Is but a loving liar.

Davison. I trust your grace
Hath in your own heart no such doubt
of them

As speaks in mockery through your lips.

Elizabeth. By God,
I say much less than righteous truth
might speak
Of their loud loves that ring with
emptiness,
And hollow-throated loyalties whose
heart

Is wind and clamorous promise. Ye
desire,—

With all your souls ye swear that ye
desire,—

The queen of Scots were happily re-
moved,

And not a knave that loves me will put
hand

To the enterprise ye look for only of me
Who only would forbear it.

Davison. If your grace
Be minded yet it shall be done at all,
The way that were most honorable and
just

Were safest, sure, and best.

Elizabeth. I dreamt last night
Our murderess there in hold had tasted
death

By execution of the sentence done
That was pronounced upon her; and the
news

So stung my heart with wrath to hear
of it

That had I had a sword,—look to't,
and 'ware!—

I had thrust it through thy body.

Davison. God defend!
'Twas well I came not in your highness'
way

While the hot mood was on you. But
indeed

I would know soothly if your mind be
changed

From its late root of purpose.

Elizabeth. No, by God;
But I were fain it could be somewise
done,

And leave the blame not on me. And
so much,

If there were love and honesty in one
Whom I held faithful and exact of care,
Should easily be performed; but here
I find

This dainty fellow so precise a knave
As will take all things dangerous on his
tongue,

And nothing on his hand: hot-mouthed
and large

In zeal to stuff mine ears with promises,
But perjurous in performance: did he
not

Set hand among you to the bond where-
by

He is bound at utmost hazard of his
life

To do me such a service? yet I could
Have wrought as well without him, had
I wist

Of this faint falsehood in his heart.
There is

That Wingfield whom thou wot'st of,
would have done

With glad good-will what I required of
him,

And made no Puritan mouths on't.

Davison. Madam, yet
Far better were it all should but be
done

By line of law and judgment.

Elizabeth. There be men
Wiser than thou that see this otherwise.

Davison. All is not wisdom that of
wise men comes,

Nor are all eyes that search the ways
of state

Clear as a just man's conscience.

Elizabeth. Proverbs! ha?

Who made thee master of these sen-
tences,

Prime tongue of ethics and philosophy?

Davison. An honest heart to serve
your majesty;

Naught else nor subtler in its reach of
wit

Than very simpleness of meaning.

Elizabeth. Nay,

I do believe thee; heartily I do.

Did my lord admiral not desire thee
bring

The warrant for her execution?

Davison. Ay,
Madam; here is it.

Elizabeth. I would it might not be,
Or being so just were yet not neces-
sary.

Art thou not heartily sorry — wouldst
thou not,
I say, be sad — to see me sign it?

Davison. Madam,
I grieve at any soul's mishap that lives,
And specially for shipwreck of a life
To you so near allied; but seeing this
doom
Wrung forth from justice by necessity,
I had rather guilt should bleed than
innocence.

Elizabeth. When I shall sign, take
thou this instantly
To the lord chancellor: see it straight
be sealed

As quietly as he may, not saying a
word,

That no man come to know it untimely:
then

Send it to the earls of Kent and
Shrewsbury,

Who are here set down to see this jus-
tice done:

I would no more be troubled with this
coil

Till all be through. But, for the place
of doom,

The hall there of the castle, in my
mind,

Were fitter than the court or open
green.

And as thou goest betake thee on thy
way

To Walsingham, where he lies sick at
home,

And let him know what hath of us
been done:

Whereof the grief, I fear me, shall go
near

To kill his heart outright.

Davison. Your majesty
Hath yet not signed the warrant.

Elizabeth. Ha! God's blood!
Art thou from tutor of philosophy late
Grown counsellor too, and more than
counsellor, thou

To appoint me where and what this
hand of mine

Shall at thy beck obsequiously sub-
scribe

And follow on thy finger? By God's
death,

What if it please me now not sign at
all?

This letter of my kinswoman's last
writ

Hath more compulsion in it, and more
power

To enforce my pity, than a thousand
tongues

Dictating death against her in mine
ear

Of mine own vassal subjects. Here
but now

She writes me she thanks God with all
her heart

That it hath pleased him by the mean
of me

To make an end of her life's pilgrim-
age,

Which hath been weary to her; and
doth not ask

To see its length drawn longer, having
had

Too much experience of its bitterness:
But only doth entreat me, since she

may
Look for no favor at their zealous
hands

Who are first in councils of my mir-
istry,

That only I myself will grant her
prayers;

Whereof the first is, since she cannot
hope

For English burial with such Catholic
rites

As here were used in time of the an-
cient kings,

Mine ancestors and hers, and since the
tombs

Lie violated in Scotland of her sires,
That so soon ever as her enemies

Shall with her innocent blood be sati-
ated,

Her body by her servants may be
borne

To some ground consecrated, there to
be

Interred: and rather, she desires, in
France,

Where sleep her honored mother's
ashes; so
At length may her poor body find the rest
Which living it has never known:
thereto,
She prays me, from the fears she hath
of those
To whose harsh hand I have abandoned her,
She may not secretly be done to death,
But in her servants' sight and others',
who
May witness her obedience kept and
faith
To the true Church, and guard her
memory safe
From slanders haply to be blown
abroad
Concerning her by mouths of enemies:
last,
She asks that her attendants, who so
well
And faithfully through all her miseries
past
Have served her, may go freely where
they please,
And lose not those small legacies of
hers
Which poverty can yet bequeath to
them.
This she conjures me by the blood of
Christ,
Our kinship, and my grandsire's
memory,
Who was her father's grandsire and a
king,
And by the name of queen she bears
with her
Even to the death, that I will not
refuse,
And that a word in mine own hand
may thus
Assure her, who will then as she hath
lived
Die mine affectionate sister and pris-
oner. See,
Howe'er she have sinned, what heart
were mine, if this
Drew no tears from me: not the mean-
est soul
That lives most miserable but with
such words
Must needs draw down men's pity.

Davison. Sure it is,
This queen hath skill of writing: and
her hand
Hath manifold eloquence with various
voice
To express discourse of sirens or of
snakes,
A mermaid's or a monster's, uttering
best
All music or all malice. Here is come
A letter writ long since of hers to you
From Sheffield Castle, which for shame
or fear
She durst not or she would not thence
despatch,
Sent secretly to me from Fotheringay,
Not from her hand, but with her own
hand writ,
So foul of import and malignity
I durst not for your majesty's respect
With its fierce infamies afire from hell
Offend your gracious eyesight; but
because
Your justice by your mercy's ignorant
hand
Hath her fair eyes put out, and walks
now blind
Even by the pit's edge deathward, par-
don me
If what you never should have seen be
shown
By hands that rather would take fire in
hand
Than lay in yours this writing.

[*Gives her a letter.*]

Elizabeth. By this light,
Whate'er be here, thou hadst done pre-
sumptuously,
And Walsingham thy principal, to
keep
Aught from mine eyes that being to me
designed
Might even with most offence enlighten
them.
Here is her hand, indeed; and she
takes up [Reading.
In gracious wise enough the charge
imposed
By promise on her and desire of ours,
How loath soe'er she be, regretfully
To bring such things in question of
discourse,
Yet with no passion but sincerity,

As God shall witness her, declares to us

What our good lady of Shrewsbury said to her

Touching ourself in terms ensuing: whereto

Answering, she chid this dame for such belief,

And reprehended for licentious tongue, To speak so lewdly of us; which herself

Believes not, knowing the woman's natural heart

An evil will as then to us-ward. Here She writes no more than I would well believe

Of her as of the countess. Ha!

Davison. Your grace Shall but defile and vex your eyes and heart

To read these villanies through.

Elizabeth. God's death, man! peace: Thou wert not best incense me toward thine own,

Whose eyes have been before me in them. What!

Was she not mad to write this? *One that had*

Your promise — lay with you times numberless —

All license and all privateness that may Be used of wife and husband! yea, of her

And more dead men than shame remembers. *God*

Shall stand her witness — with the devil of hell

For sponsor to her vows, whose spirit in her

Begot himself this issue. Ha! the duke — Nay, God shall give me patience — and his knave,

And Hatton — God have mercy! nay, but hate,

Hate and constraint and rage have wrecked her wits,

And continence of life cut off from lust, — This common stale of Scotland, that has tried

The sins of three rank nations, and consumed

Their veins whose life she took not, — Italy,

France that put half this poison in her blood,

And her own kingdom that being sick therewith

Vomited out on ours the venomous thing

Whose head we set not foot on; but may God

Make my fame fouler through the world than hers,

And ranker in men's record, if I spare The she-wolf that I saved, the woman-beast,

Wolf-woman — how the Latin rings we know,

And what lewd lair first reared her, and whose hand

Writ broad across the Louvre and Holy-rood

Lupanar; but no brothel ever bred Or breathed so rank a soul's infection, spawned

Or spat such foulness in God's face and man's,

Or festered in such falsehood as her breath

Strikes honor sick with, and the spirit of shame

Dead as her fang shall strike herself, and send

The serpent that corruption calls her soul

To vie strange venoms with the worm of hell,

And make the face of darkness and the grave

Blush hotter with the fires wherein that soul

Sinks deeper than damnation.

Davison. Let your grace

Think only that but now the thing is known

And self-discovered which too long your love

Too dangerously hath cherished; and forget

All but that end which yet remains for her,

That right by pity be not overcome.

Elizabeth. God pity so my soul as I do right,

And show me no more grace alive or dead

Than I do justice here. Give me again
That warrant I put by, being foolish:
yea,
Thy word spake sooth, — my soul's eyes
were put out;
I could not see for pity. Thou didst
well —
I am bounden to thee heartily — to cure
My sight of this distemper, and my soul.
Here in God's sight I set mine hand,
who thought
Never to take this thing upon it, nor
Do God so bitter service. Take this
hence,
And let me see no word nor hear of her
Till the sun see not such a soul alive.

ACT V. — MARY STUART.

SCENE I. — MARY'S CHAMBER IN
FOTHERINGAY CASTLE.

MARY STUART and MARY BEATON.
Mary Stuart (sings).

*O Lord my God,
I have trusted in thee;
O Jesu my dearest one,
Now set me free.
In prison's oppression,
In sorrow's obsession,
I weary for thee.
With sighing and crying
Bowed down as dying,
I adore thee, I implore thee, set me free!*

Free are the dead: yet fain I would have
had
Once, before all captivity find end,
Some breath of freedom living. These
that come,
I think, with no such message, must not
find,
For all this lameness of my limbs, a
heart
As maimed in me with sickness. Three
years gone,
When last I parted from the earl mar-
shal's charge,
I did not think to see his face again
Turned on me as his prisoner. Now his
wife

Will take no jealousy more to hear of
it,
I trust, albeit we meet not as unfriends,
If it be mortal news he brings me. Go,
If I seem ready, as meseems I should,
And well arrayed to bear myself indeed
None otherwise than queenlike in their
sight,
Bid them come in.

[*Exit MARY BEATON.*

I cannot tell at last
If it be fear or hope that should expect
Death: I have had enough of hope, and
fear

Was none of my familiars while I lived
Such life as had more pleasant things
to lose

Than death or life may now divide me
from.

'Tis not so much to look upon the sun
With eyes that may not lead us where
we will,

And halt behind the footless flight of
hope

With feet that may not follow; nor were
aught

So much, of all things life may think to
have,

That one not cowardly born should find
it worth

The purchase of so base a price as this,
To stand self-shamed as coward. I do
not think

This is mine end that comes upon me;
but

I had liefer far it were than, were it not,
That ever I should fear it.

*Enter KENT, SHREWSBURY, BEALE,
and Sheriff.*

Sirs, good day:
With such good heart as prisoners have,
I bid

You and your message welcome.

Kent. Madam, this
The secretary of the council here hath
charge

To read as their commission.

Mary Stuart. Let me hear
In as brief wise as may beseem the time
The purport of it.

Beale. Our commission here
Given by the council under the great
seal

Pronounces on your head for present
doom

Death, by this written sentence.

Mary Stuart. Ay, my lords?

May I believe this, and not hold myself
Mocked as a child with shadows? In

God's name,

Speak you, my lord of Shrewsbury: let
me know

If this be dream or waking.

Kent. Verily,

No dream it is, nor dreamers we that
pray,

Madam, you meetly would prepare your-
self

To stand before God's judgment
presently.

Mary Stuart. I had rather so than
ever stand again

Before the face of man's. Why speak
not you,

To whom I speak, my lord earl marshal?
Nay,

Look not so heavily: by my life, he
stands

As one at point to weep. Why, good my
lord,

To know that none may swear by Mary's
life,

And hope again to find belief of man
Upon so slight a warrant, should not

bring

This trouble on your eyes: look up, and
say

The word you have for her that never
was

Less than your friend, and prisoner.

Shrewsbury. None save this,

Which willingly I would not speak, I
may:

That presently your time is come to die.

Mary Stuart. Why, then, I am well
content to leave a world

Wherein I am no more serviceable at
all

To God or man, and have therein so
long

Endured so much affliction. All my life
I have ever earnestly desired the love

And friendship of your queen; have
warned her oft

Of coming dangers; and have cherished
long

The wish that I but once might speak
with her

In plain-souled confidence, being well
assured,

Had we but once met, there an end had
been

Of jealousies between us: but our foes,
With equal wrong toward either, treach-

erously

Have kept us still in sunder; by whose
craft

And crooked policy hath my sister's
crown

Fallen in great peril, and myself have
been

Imprisoned, and inveterately maligned,
And here must now be murdered. But

I know

That only for my faith's sake I must die,
And this to know for truth is recom-

pense

As large as all my sufferings. For the
crime

Wherewith I am charged, upon this
holy book

I lay mine hand for witness of my plea,
I am wholly ignorant of it; and sol-

emnly

Declare that never yet conspiracy
Devised against the queen my sister's

life

Took instigation or assent from me.

Kent. You swear but on a popish
Testament:

Such oaths are all as worthless as the
book.

Mary Stuart. I swear upon the book
wherein I trust:

Would you give rather credit to mine
oath

Sworn on your Scriptures that I trust
not in?

Kent. Madam, I fain would have you
heartily

Renounce your superstition; toward
which end

With us the godly dean of Peter
borough,

Good Richard Fletcher, well approved
for faith

Of God and of the queen, is hither
come

To proffer you his prayerful ministry.

Mary Stuart. If you, my lords, or he
will pray for me,
I shall be thankful for your prayers;
but may not
With theirs that hold another faith mix
mine.
I pray you, therefore, that mine almoner
may
Have leave to attend on me, that from
his hands
I, having made confession, may receive
The sacrament.

Kent. We may not grant you this.

Mary Stuart. I shall not see my
chaplain ere I die?
But two months gone, this grace was
granted me
By word expressly from your queen, to
have
Again his ministration; and at last
In the utter hour and bitter strait of
death,
Is this denied me?

Kent. Madam, for your soul
More meet it were to cast these mum-
meries out,
And bear Christ only in your heart,
than serve
With ceremonies of ritual hand and
tongue
His mere idolatrous likeness.

Mary Stuart. This were strange,
That I should bear him visible in my
hand,
Or keep with lips and knees his titular
rites,
And cast in heart no thought upon
him. Nay,
Put me, I pray, to no more argument;
But if this least thing be not granted,
yet
Grant me to know the season of my
death.

Shrewsbury. At eight by dawn to-
morrow you must die.

Mary Stuart. So shall I hardly see
the sun again.
By dawn to-morrow? meanest men con-
demned
Give not their lives' breath up so sud-
denly:
Howbeit, I had rather yield you thanks,
who make

Such brief end of the bitterness of
death

For me who have borne such bitter
length of life,

Than plead with protestation of appeal
For half a piteous hour's remission;
nor

Henceforward shall I be denied of
man

Aught, who may never now crave aught
again,

But whence is no denial. Yet shall
this

Not easily be believed of men, nor find
In foreign ears acceptance, that a queen
Should be thrust out of life thus. Good
my friend,

Bid my physician Gorion come to me:
I have to speak with him — sirs, with
your leave —

Of certain moneys due to me in France.
What! shall I twice desire your leave,
my lords,

To live these poor last hours of mine
alive

At peace among my friends? I have
much to do,

And little time wherein to do it is left.

Shrewsbury (to KENT apart). I pray
she may not mean worse than I
would

Against herself ere morning.

Kent. Let not then
This French knave's drugs come near
her, nor himself:
We will take order for it.

Shrewsbury. Nay, this were but
To exasperate more her thwarted
heart, and make

Despair more desperate than itself.
Pray God

She be not minded to compel us put
Force at the last upon her of men's
hands

To hale her violently to death, and
make

Judgment look foul and fierce as mur-
der's face

With stain of strife and passion.

[*Exeunt all but MARY STUART and
MARY BEATON.*]

Mary Stuart. So, my friend,
The last of all our Maries are you left

To-morrow. Strange has been my life,
 and now
 Strange looks my death upon me: yet,
 albeit
 Nor the hour nor manner of it be mine
 to choose,
 Ours is it yet, and all men's in the
 world,
 To make death welcome in what wise
 we will.
 Bid you my chaplain, though he see
 me not,
 Watch through the night, and pray for
 me: perchance,
 When ere the sundawn they shall bring
 me forth,
 I may behold him, and upon my knees
 Receive his blessing. Let our supper
 be
 Served earlier in than wont was:
 whereunto
 I bid my true poor servants here, to
 take
 Farewell, and drink at parting to them
 all
 The cup of my last kindness, in good
 hope
 They shall stand alway constant in
 their faith,
 And dwell in peace together: there-
 upon
 What little store is left me will I share
 Among them, and between my girls
 divide
 My wardrobe and my jewels severally,
 Reserving but the black robe and the
 red
 That shall attire me for my death; and
 last
 With mine own hand shall be my will
 writ out,
 And all memorials more set down
 therein
 That I would leave for legacies of love
 To my next kinsmen and my house-
 hold folk.
 And to the king my brother yet of
 France
 Must I write briefly, but a word to say
 I am innocent of the charge whereon I
 die
 Now for my right's sake claimed upon
 this crown,

And our true faith's sake, but an-
 barred from sight
 Even of mine almoner here, though
 hard at hand;
 And I would bid him take upon his
 charge
 The keeping of my servants, as I think
 He shall not for compassionate shame
 refuse,
 Albeit his life be softer than his heart;
 And in religion for a queen's soul pray
 That once was styled Most Christian,
 and is now
 In the true faith about to die, deprived
 Of all her past possessions. But this
 most
 And first behooves it, that the king of
 Spain
 By Gorian's word of mouth receive my
 heart,
 Who soon shall stand before him. Bid
 the leech
 Come hither, and alone, to speak with
 me.

[Exit MARY BEATON.]

She is dumb as death: yet never in her
 life
 Hath she been quick of tongue. For
 all the rest,
 Poor souls, how well they love me, all
 as well
 I think I know; and one of them or
 twain
 At least may surely see me to my death
 Ere twice the hours have changed
 again. Perchance
 Love that can weep not would the glad-
 lier die
 For those it cannot weep on. Time
 wears thin:
 They should not now play laggard:
 nay, he comes,
 The last that ever speaks alone with
 me
 Before my soul shall speak alone with
 God.

Enter GORION.

I have sent once more for you to no
 such end
 As sick men for physicians: no strong
 drug
 May put the death next morning
 twelve hours back

Whose twilight overshadows me, that
am
Nor sick nor medicinable. Let me
know

If I may lay the last of all my trust
On you that ever shall be laid on man
To prove him kind and loyal.

Gorion. So may God
Deal with me, madam, as I prove to
you

Faithful, though none but I were in the
world

That you might trust beside.

Mary Stuart. With equal heart
Do I believe and thank you. I would
send

To Paris for the ambassador from
Spain

This letter with two diamonds, which
your craft

For me must cover from men's thiev-
ish eyes,

Where they may be not looked for.

Gorion. Easily
Within some molten drug may these be
hid,

And faithfully by me conveyed to
him.

Mary Stuart. The lesser of them
shall he keep in sign

Of my good friendship toward himself :
but this

In token to King Philip shall he give
That for the truth I die, and dying com-
mend

To him my friends and servants, Gil-
bert Curle,

His sister, and Jane Kennedy, who
shall

To-night watch by me; and my ladies
all

That have endured my prison: let him
not

Forget from his good favor one of
these

That I remember to him; Charles
Arundel,

And either banished Paget; one whose
heart

Was better toward my service than his
hand,

Morgan; and of mine exiles for their
faith,

The prelates first of Glasgow and of
Ross;

And Liggons and Throgmorton, that
have lost

For me their leave to live on English
earth;

And Westmoreland, that lives now
more forlorn

Than died that earl who rose for me
with him.

These I beseech him favor for my sake
Still: and forget not, if he come again

To rule as king in England, one of them
That were mine enemies here: the

treasurer first,
And Leicester, Walsingham, and Hunt-
ingdon,

At Tutbury once my foe, fifteen years
gone,

And Wade that spied upon me three
years since,

And Paulet here my gaoler: set them
down

For him to wreak wrath's utmost jus-
tice on,

In my revenge remembered. Though
I be

Dead, let him not forsake his hope to
reign

Upon this people: with my last breath
left

I make this last prayer to him, that not
the less

He will maintain the invasion yet de-
signed

Of us before on England: let him think,
It is God's quarrel, and on earth a cause

Well worthy of his greatness; which
being won,

Let him forget no man of these nor me.
And now will I lie down, that four

hours' sleep
May give me strength before I sleep

again,
And need take never thought for wak-
ing more.

SCENE II. — THE PRESENCE CHAMBER.
SHREWSBURY, KENT, PAULET, DRURY,

MELVILLE, and Attendants.

Kent. The stroke is past of eight.

Shrewsbury. Not far, my lord.

Kent. What stays the provost and the sheriff yet
That went ere this to bring the prisoner forth?
What! are her doors locked inwards?
Then perchance
Our last night's auguries of some close design
By death contrived of her self-slaught-
terous hand
To baffle death by justice hit but right
The heart of her bad purpose.

Shrewsbury. Fear it not:
See where she comes, a queenlier thing
to see
Than whom such thoughts take hold
on.

Enter MARY STUART, led by two gentlemen and preceded by the Sheriff; MARY BEATON, BARBARA MOWBRAY, and other ladies behind, who remain in the doorway.

Melville (kneeling to MARY). Woe am
I,
Madam, that I must bear to Scotland
back
Such tidings watered with such tears as
these!

Mary Stuart. Weep not, good Mel-
ville: rather should your heart
Rejoice that here an end is come at
last
Of Mary Stuart's long sorrows; for be
sure

That all this world is only vanity.
And this record I pray you make of me,
That a true woman to my faith I die,
And true to Scotland and to France;
but God

Forgive them that have long desired
mine end,
And with false tongues have thirsted
for my blood

As the hart thirsteth for the water-
brooks.

O God, who art truth, and the author
of all truth,

Thou knowest the extreme recesses of
my heart,

And how that I was willing all my days
That England should with Scotland be
fast friends.

Commend me to my son: tell him that I

Have nothing done to prejudice his
rights

As king. And now, good Melville, fare
thee well.

My lord of Kent, whence comes it that
your charge

Hath bidden back my women there at
door

Who fain to the end would bear me
company?

Kent. Madam, this were not seemly
nor discreet,

That these should so have leave to vex
men's ears

With cries and loose lamentings: haply
too

They might in superstition seek to dip
Their handkerchiefs for relics in your
blood.

Mary Stuart. That will I pledge my
word they shall not. Nay,

The queen would surely not deny me
this,

The poor last thing that I shall ask on
earth.

Even a far meaner person dying, I
think,

She would not have so handled. Sir,
you know

I am her cousin, of her grandsire's
blood,

A queen of France by marriage, and by
birth

Anointed queen of Scotland. My poor
girls

Desire no more than but to see me
die.

Shrewsbury. Madam, you have leave
to elect of this your train

Two ladies with four men to go with
you.

Mary Stuart. I choose from forth
my Scottish following here

Jane Kennedy, with Elspeth Curle: of
men,

Bourgoin and Gorion shall attend on
me,

Gervais and Didier.—Come then, let
us go.

[*Exeunt: manent MARY BEATON and
BARBARA MOWBRAY.*

Barbara. I wist I was not worthy,
though my child

It is that her own hands made Christian: but

I deemed she should have bid you go with her.

Alas! and would not all we die with her?

Mary Beaton. Why, from the gallery here at hand your eyes

May go with her along the hall beneath

Even to the scaffold; and I fain would hear

What fain I would not look on. Pray you, then,

If you may bear to see it as those below,
Do me that sad good service of your eyes

For mine to look upon it, and declare
All that till all be done I will not see:
I pray you of your pity.

Barbara. Though mine heart

Break, it shall not for fear forsake the sight

That may be faithful yet in following her,

Nor yet for grief refuse your prayer,
being fain

To give your love such bitter comfort,
who

So long have never left her.

Mary Beaton. Till she die —

I have ever known I shall not till she die.

See you yet aught? if I hear spoken words,

My heart can better bear these pulses,
else

Unbearable, that rend it.

Barbara. Yea, I see

Stand in mid hall the scaffold, black as death,

And black the block upon it; all around,

Against the throng a guard of halberdiers;

And the axe against the scaffold-rail reclined,

And two men masked on either hand beyond;

And hard behind the block a cushion set,

Black, as the chair behind it.

Mary Beaton. When I saw

Fallen on a scaffold once a young man's head,

Such things as these I saw not. Nay,
but on:

I knew not that I spake; and toward your ears

Indeed I spake not.

Barbara. All those faces change;
She comes more royally than ever yet

Fell foot of man triumphant on this earth,

Imperial more than empire made her,
born

Enthroned as queen sat never. Not a line

Stirs of her sovereign feature: like a bride

Brought home she mounts the scaffold;
and her eyes

Sweep regal round the cirque beneath,
and rest,

Subsiding with a smile. She sits, and they,

The doomsmen earls, beside her; at her left

The sheriff, and the clerk at hand on high,

Te read the warrant.

Mary Beaton. None stands there but knows

What things therein are writ against her: God

Knows what therein is writ not. God forgive

All!

Barbara. Not a face there breathes
of all the throng

But is more moved than hers to hear this read,

Whose look alone is changed not.

Mary Beaton. Once I knew
A face that changed not in as dire an hour,

More than the queen's face changes.
Hath he not

Ended?

Barbara. You cannot hear them speak below:

Come near, and hearken; bid not me repeat

All.

Mary Beaton. I beseech you — for I may not come.

Barbara. Now speaks Lord Shrewsbury but a word or twain;
And brieflier yet she answers, and stands up

As though to kneel, and pray.

Mary Beaton. I too have prayed:
God hear at last her prayers not less than mine,
Which failed not, sure, of hearing.

Barbara. Now draws nigh
That heretic priest, and bows himself, and thrice

Strives, as a man that sleeps in pain, to speak,

Stammering: she waves him by, as one whose prayers

She knows may naught avail her; now she kneels,

And the earls rebuke her, and she answers not,

Kneeling. O Christ, whose likeness there engraved

She strikes against her bosom, hear her! Now

That priest lifts up his voice against her prayer,

Praying; and a voice all round goes up with his:

But hers is lift up higher than climbs their cry,

In the great psalms of penitence; and now

She prays aloud in English; for the Pope

Our father, and his Church; and for her son,

And for the queen her murderess; and that God

May turn from England yet his wrath away;

And so forgives her enemies; and implores

High intercession of the saints with Christ,

Whom crucified she kisses on his cross,

And crossing now her breast — ah, heard you not?

Even as thine arms were spread upon the cross,

*So make thy grace, O Jesus, wide for me,
Receive me to thy mercy so, and so
Forgive my sins.*

Mary Beaton. So be it, if so God please.

Is she not risen up yet?

Barbara. Yea, but mine eyes
Darken: because those deadly twain close masked

Draw nigh as men that crave forgiveness, which

Gently she grants; *For now, she said, I hope*

You shall end all my troubles. Now meseems

They would put hand upon her as to help,

And disarray her raiment; but she smiles —

Heard you not that? can you nor hear nor speak,

Poor heart, for pain? *Truly, she said, my lords,*

*I never had such chamber-grooms before
As these to wait on me.*

Mary Beaton. An end, an end!

Barbara. Now come those twain upon the scaffold up

Whom she preferred before us; and she lays

Her crucifix down, which now the headsman takes

Into his cursed hand, but being rebuked
Puts back for shame that sacred spoil of hers.

And now they lift her veil up from her head

Softly, and softly draw the black robe off,

And all in red as of a funeral flame

She stands up statelier yet before them, tall

And clothed as if with sunset; and she takes

From Elspeth's hand the crimson sleeves, and draws

Their covering on her arms: and now those twain

Burst out aloud in weeping; and she speaks —

Weep not: I promised for you. Now she kneels;

And Jane binds round a kerchief on her eyes;

And smiling last her heavenliest smile on earth,

She waves a blind hand toward them,
 with *Farewell*,
Farewell, to meet again; and they come
 down,
 And leave her praying aloud, *In thee, O*
 Lord,
I put my trust. And now, that psalm
 being through,
 She lays between the block and her soft
 neck
 Her long white peerless hands up ten-
 derly,
 Which now the headsman draws again
 away,
 But softly too. Now stir her lips
 again —

Into thine hands, O Lord, into thine hands,
Lord, I commend my spirit. And now —

 But now,
 Look you, not I, the last upon her.

Mary Beaton. Ha!

He strikes awry: she stirs not. Nay,
 but now

He strikes aright, and ends it.

Barbara. Hark, a cry!

Voice below. So perish all found ene-
 mies of the queen!

Another Voice. Amen!

Mary Beaton. I heard that very cry go
 up

Far off long since to God, who answers
 here.

POEMS AND BALLADS.

A LEAVE-TAKING.

LET us go hence, my songs : she will not hear ;

Let us go hence together without fear. Keep silence now, for singing-time is over,

And over all old things and all things dear.

She loves not you nor me as all we love her :

Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,
She would not hear.

Let us rise up and part : she will not know.

Let us go seaward as the great winds go,

Full of blown sand and foam. What help is there ?

There is no help, for all these things are so,

And all the world is bitter as a tear.

And how these things are, though ye strove to show,

She would not know.

Let us go home and hence : she will not weep.

We gave love many dreams and days to keep,

Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not grow,

Saying, "If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle, and reap."

All is reaped now ; no grass is left to mow :

And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep,

She would not weep.

Let us go hence and rest . she will not love.

She shall not hear us if we sing here-of,

Nor see love's ways, how sore they are and steep.

Come hence, let be, lie still ; it is enough.

Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep ;
And, though she saw all heaven in flower above,

She would not love.

Let us give up, go down : she will not care.

Though all the stars made gold of all the air,

And the sea moving saw before it move

One moon-flower making all the foam-flowers fair ;

Though all those waves went over us, and drove

Deep down the stifling lips and drowning hair, —

She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence : she will not see.

Sing all once more together ; surely she,

She too, remembering days and words that were,

Will turn a little toward us, sighing ; but we,

We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not been there.

Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,

She would not see.

ITYLUS.

SWALLOW, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the
spring?

A thousand summers are over and
dead.

What hast thou found in the spring to
follow?

What hast thou found in thine heart
to sing?

What wilt thou do when the sum-
mer is shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the
south,

The soft south whither thine heart
is set?

Shall not the grief of the old time fol-
low?

Shall not the song thereof cleave to
thy mouth?

Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the
south;

But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon
hollow,

From tawny body and sweet small
mouth

Feed the heart of the night with
fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O changing swal-
low,

All spring through till the spring
be done,

Clothed with the light of the night on
the dew,

Sing, while the hours and the wild
birds follow,

Take flight and follow and find the
sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft, light swallow,
Though all things feast in the spring's
guest-chamber,

How hast thou heart to be glad
thereof yet?

For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
Till life forget, and death remember,
Till thou remember, and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
Hast thou the heart? is it all past
over?

Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet of thy lover the
spring;

But what wilt thou say to the spring
thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember,
And over my head the waves have
met.

But thou wouldst tarry, or I would fol-
low,

Could I forget, or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember, and I for-
get.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,
The heart's division divideth us.

Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth, among sea-gulfs
hollow,

To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian
sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.

Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?
The woven web that was plain to fol-
low,

The small slain body, the flower-like
face,

Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!

The hands that cling and the feet
that follow,

The voice of the child's blood cry-
ing yet,

*Who hath remembered me? Who hath
forgotten?*

Thou hast forgotten, O summer swal-
low,

But the world shall end when I
forget.

RONDEL.

THESE many years since we began to be,
 What have the gods done with us? what
 with me,
 What with my love? They have shown
 me fates and fears,
 Harsh springs, and fountains bitterer
 than the sea,
 Grief a fixed star, and joy a vane that
 veers,
 These many years.

With her, my love, with her have they
 done well?
 But who shall answer for her? who shall
 tell
 Sweet things or sad, such things as no
 man hears?
 May no tears fall, if no tears ever fell,
 From eyes more dear to me than star-
 riest spheres
 These many years!

But if tears ever touched, for any grief,
 Those eyelids folded like a white-rose
 leaf,
 Deep double shells wherethrough the
 eye-flower peers,
 Let them weep once more only, sweet
 and brief,
 Brief tears and bright, for one who gave
 her tears
 These many years.

A LITANY.

ἐν οὐρανῷ φαεινὰς
 κρύψω παρ' ὑμῖν αὐγὰς,
 μίας πρὸ νυκτὸς ἐπὶ τὰ νύκτας ἔξετε, κ.τ.λ.
Anth. Sac.

FIRST ANTIPHONE.

ALL the bright lights of heaven
 I will make dark over thee;
 One night shall be as seven,
 That its skirts may cover thee;
 I will send on thy strong men a sword,
 On thy remnant a rod:
 Ye shall know that I am the Lord,
 Saith the Lord God.

SECOND ANTIPHONE.

All the bright lights of heaven
 Thou hast made dark over us;
 One night has been as seven,
 That its skirt might cover us;
 Thou hast sent on our strong men a
 sword,
 On our remnant a rod:
 We know that thou art the Lord,
 O Lord our God!

THIRD ANTIPHONE.

As the tresses and wings of the wind
 Are scattered and shaken,
 I will scatter all them that have sinned:
 There shall none be taken;
 As a sower that scattereth seed,
 So will I scatter them;
 As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,
 I will break and shatter them.

FOURTH ANTIPHONE.

As the wings and the locks of the wind
 Are scattered and shaken,
 Thou hast scattered all them that have
 sinned:
 There was no man taken;
 As a sower that scattereth seed,
 So hast thou scattered us;
 As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,
 Thou hast broken and shattered us.

FIFTH ANTIPHONE.

From all thy lovers that love thee,
 I God will sunder thee;
 I will make darkness above thee,
 And thick darkness under thee;
 Before me goeth a light,
 Behind me a sword:
 Shall a remnant find grace in my sight?
 I am the Lord.

SIXTH ANTIPHONE.

From all our lovers that love us,
 Thou God didst sunder us;
 Thou madest darkness above us,
 And thick darkness under us;
 Thou hast kindled thy wrath for a light,
 And made ready thy sword:
 Let a remnant find grace in thy sight,
 We beseech thee, O Lord!

SEVENTH ANTIPHONE.

Wilt thou bring fine gold for a payment
 For sins on this wise?
 For the glittering of raiment,
 And the shining of eyes,
 For the painting of faces,
 And the sundering of trust,
 For the sins of thine high places
 And delight of thy lust?

For your high things ye shall have lowly,
 Lamentation for song;
 For, behold, I God am holy,
 I the Lord am strong.
 Ye shall seek me, and shall not reach me
 Till the wine-press be trod;
 In that hour ye shall turn, and beseech
 me,
 Saith the Lord God.

EIGHTH ANTIPHONE.

Not with fine gold for a payment,
 But with coin of sighs,
 But with rending of raiment,
 And with weeping of eyes,
 But with shame of stricken faces,
 And with strewing of dust,
 For the sin of stately places
 And lordship of lust;

With voices of men made lowly,
 Made empty of song,
 O Lord God most holy,
 O God most strong,
 We reach out hands to reach thee
 Ere the wine-press be trod;
 We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech
 thee,
 O Lord our God!

NINTH ANTIPHONE.

In that hour thou shalt say to the night,
 Come down and cover us;
 To the cloud on thy left and thy right,
 Be thou spread over us.
 A snare shall be as thy mother,
 And a curse thy bride;
 Thou shalt put her away, and another
 Shall lie by thy side.

Thou shalt neither rise up by day,
 Nor lie down by night.
 Would God it were dark! thou shalt
 say;
 Would God it were light!
 And the sight of thine eyes shall be
 made
 As the burning of fire;
 And thy soul shall be sorely afraid
 For thy soul's desire.

Ye whom your lords loved well,
 Putting silver and gold on you,
 The inevitable hell
 Shall surely take hold on you;
 Your gold shall be for a token,
 Your staff for a rod;
 With the breaking of bands ye are
 broken,
 Saith the Lord God.

TENTH ANTIPHONE.

In our sorrow we said to the night,
 Fall down and cover us;
 To the darkness at left and at right,
 Be thou shed over us.
 We had breaking of spirit to mother,
 And cursing to bride;
 And one was slain, and another
 Stood up at our side.

We could not arise by day,
 Nor lie down by night;
 Thy sword was sharp in our way,
 Thy word in our sight;
 The delight of our eyelids was made
 As the burning of fire,
 And our souls became sorely afraid
 For our soul's desire.

We whom the world loved well,
 Laving silver and gold on us,
 The kingdom of death and of hell
 Riseth up to take hold on us;
 Our gold is turned to a token,
 Our staff to a rod:
 Yet shalt thou bind them up that were
 broken,
 O Lord our God!

A LAMENTATION.

I.

Who hath known the ways of time,
 Or trodden behind his feet?
 There is no such man among men.
 For chance overcomes him, or crime
 Changes; for all things sweet
 In time wax bitter again.
 Who shall give sorrow enough,
 Or who the abundance of tears?
 Mine eyes are heavy with love,
 And a sword gone thorough mine ears,
 A sound like a sword and fire,
 For pity, for great desire;
 Who shall insure me thereof,
 Lest I die, being full of my fears?

Who hath known the ways and the
 wrath,
 The sleepless spirit, the root
 And blossom of evil will,
 The divine device of a god?
 Who shall behold it, or hath?
 The twice-tongued prophets are mute,
 The many speakers are still;
 No foot has travelled or trod,
 No hand has meted, his path.
 Man's fate is a blood-red fruit,
 And the mighty gods have their fill
 And relax not the rein, or the rod.

Ye were mighty in heart from of old,
 Ye slew with the spear, and are slain.
 Keen after heat is the cold,
 Sore after summer is rain,
 And melteth man to the bone.
 As water he weareth away,
 As a flower, as an hour in a day,
 Fallen from laughter to moan.
 But my spirit is shaken with fear
 Lest an evil thing begin,
 New-born, a spear for a spear,
 And one for another sin.
 Or ever our tears began,
 It was known from of old and said;
 One law for a living man,
 And another law for the dead
 For these are fearful and sad,
 Vain, and things without breath;
 While he lives let a man be glad,
 For none hath joy of his death.

II.

Who hath known the pain, the old pain
 of earth,
 Or all the travail of the sea,
 The many ways and waves, the birth
 Fruitless, the labor nothing worth?
 Who hath known, who knoweth, O
 gods? not we.

There is none shall say he hath seen,
 There is none he hath known.
 Though he saith, Lo, a lord have I
 been,

I have reaped and sown;
 I have seen the desire of mine eyes,
 The beginning of love,
 The season of kisses and sighs,
 And the end thereof.

I have known the ways of the sea,
 All the perilous ways;
 Strange winds have spoken with me,
 And the tongues of strange days.

I have hewn the pine for ships;
 Where steeds run arow,
 I have seen from their bridled lips
 Foam blown as the snow.

With snapping of chariot-poles
 And with straining of oars
 I have grazed in the race the goals,
 In the storm the shores;

As a greave is cleft with an arrow
 At the joint of the knee,
 I have cleft through the sea-straits
 narrow

To the heart of the sea.
 When air was smitten in sunder,
 I have watched on high
 The ways of the stars and the thun-
 der

In the night of the sky;
 Where the dark brings forth light as a
 flower,

As from lips that dissever;
 One abideth the space of an hour,
 One endureth forever.

Lo, what hath he seen or known
 Of the way and the wave
 Unbeholden, unsailed-on, unsown,
 From the breast to the grave?

Or ever the stars were made, or skies,
 Grief was born, and the kinless night,

Mother of gods without form or
name.
And light is born out of heaven, and
dies,
And one day knows not another's
light;
But night is one, and her shape the
same.
But dumb the goddesses underground
Wait, and we hear not on earth if their
feet
Rise, and the night wax loud with
their wings;
Dumb, without word or shadow of
sound;
And sift in scales, and winnow as
wheat
Men's souls, and sorrow of mani-
fold things.

III.

Nor less of grief than ours
The gods wrought long ago
To bruise men one by one;
But with the incessant hours
Fresh grief and greener woe
Spring, as the sudden sun
Year after year makes flowers;
And these die down and grow,
And the next year lacks none.

As these men sleep, have slept
The old heroes in time fled,
No dream-divided sleep;
And holier eyes have wept
Than ours, when on her dead
Gods have seen Thetis weep,
With heavenly hair far-swept
Back, heavenly hands out-spread
Round what she could not keep,

Could not one day withhold,
One night; and like as these
White ashes of no weight,
Held not his urn the cold
Ashes of Heracles?
For all things born, one gate
Opens, — no gate of gold;
Opens; and no man sees
Beyond the gods and fate.

ANIMA ANCEPS.

TILL death have broken
Sweet life's love-token,
Till all be spoken
That shall be said,
What dost thou praying,
O soul, and playing
With song and saying,
Things down and fled?
For this we know not —
That fresh springs flow not
And fresh griefs grow not
When men are dead;
When strange years cover
Lover and lover,
And joys are over,
And tears are shed.

If one day's sorrow
Mar the day's morrow;
If man's life borrow,
And man's death pay;
If souls once taken,
If lives once shaken,
Arise, awaken,
By night, by day, —
Why with strong crying
And years of sighing,
Living and dying,
Fast ye and pray?
For all your weeping,
Waking and sleeping,
Death comes to reaping
And takes away.
Though time rend after
Roof-tree from rafter,
A little laughter
Is much more worth
Than thus to measure
The hour, the treasure,
The pain, the pleasure,
The death, the birth:
Grief, when days alter,
Like joy shall falter;
Song-book and psalter,
Mourning and mirth.
Live like the swallow;
Seek not to follow,
Where earth is hollow,
Under the earth.

SONG BEFORE DEATH.

(FROM THE FRENCH.)

1795.

SWEET mother, in a minute's span
 Death parts thee and my love of thee :
 Sweet love, that yet art living man,
 Come back, true love, to comfort me.
 Back, ah, come back ! ah, wellaway !
 But my love comes not any day.

As roses, when the warm West blows,
 Break to full flower, and sweeten
 spring,
 My soul would break to a glorious rose
 In such wise at his whispering.
 In vain I listen ; wellaway !
 My love says nothing any day.

You that will weep for pity of love
 On the low place where I am lain,
 I pray you, having wept enough,
 Tell him for whom I bore such pain
 That he was yet, ah ! wellaway !
 My true love to my dying day.

ROCOCO.

TAKE hands, and part with laughter ;
 Touch lips, and part with tears ;
 Once more and no more after,
 Whatever comes with years.
 We twain shall not re-measure
 The ways that left us twain,
 Nor crush the lees of pleasure
 From sanguine grapes of pain.

We twain once well in sunder,
 What will the mad gods do
 For hate with me, I wonder,
 Or what for love with you ?
 Forget them till November,
 And dream there's April yet ;
 Forget that I remember,
 And dream that I forget.

Time found our tired love sleeping,
 And kissed away his breath ;
 But what should we do weeping,
 Though light love sleep to death ?

We have drained his lips at leisure,
 Till there's not left to drain
 A single sob of pleasure,
 A single pulse of pain.

Dream that the lips once breathless
 Might quicken if they would ;
 Say that the soul is deathless ;
 Dream that the gods are good ;
 Say March may wed September,
 And time divorce regret :
 But not that you remember,
 And not that I forget.

We have heard from hidden places
 What love scarce lives and hears ;
 We have seen on fervent faces
 The pallor of strange tears ;
 We have trod the wine-vat's treasure.
 Whence, ripe to steam and stain,
 Foams round the feet of pleasure
 The blood-red must of pain.

Remembrance may recover,
 And time bring back to time
 The name of your first lover,
 The ring of my first rhyme ;
 But rose-leaves of December
 The frosts of June shall fret,
 The day that you remember,
 The day that I forget.

The snake that hides and hisses
 In heaven, we twain have known
 The grief of cruel kisses,
 The joy whose mouth makes moan ;
 The pulse's pause and measure,
 Where in one furtive vein
 Throbs through the heart of pleasure
 The purpler blood of pain.

We have done with tears and treasons
 And love for treason's sake ;
 Room for the swift new seasons,
 The years that burn and break.
 Dismantle and dismember
 Men's days and dreams, Juliette ;
 For love may not remember,
 But time will not forget.

Life treads down love in flying,
 Time withers him at root ;
 Bring all dead things and dying,
 Reaped sheaf and ruined fruit,

Where, crushed by three days' pressure,
 Our three days' love lies slain;
 And earlier leaf of pleasure,
 And latter flower of pain.

Breathe close upon the ashes,
 It may be flame will leap;
 Unclose the soft close lashes,
 Lift up the lids, and weep.
 Light love's extinguished ember,
 Let one tear leave it wet,
 For one that you remember,
 And ten that you forget.

A BALLAD OF BURDENS.

THE burden of fair women. Vain delight,
 And love self-slain in some sweet shameful way,
 And sorrowful old age that comes by night
 As a thief comes that has no heart by day,
 And change that finds fair cheeks and leaves them gray,
 And weariness that keeps awake for hire,
 And grief that says what pleasure used to say:
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bought kisses. This is sore,
 A burden without fruit in childbearing;
 Between the nightfall and the dawn threescore,
 Threescore between the dawn and evening.
 The shuddering in thy lips, the shuddering
 In thy sad eyelids tremulous like fire,
 Makes love seem shameful and a wretched thing:
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sweet speeches. Nay, kneel down,
 Cover thy head, and weep; for verily

These market-men that buy thy white and brown
 In the last days shall take no thought for thee;
 In the last days like earth thy face shall be,
 Yea, like sea-marsh made thick with brine and mire,
 Sad with sick leavings of the sterile sea:
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of long living. Thou shalt fear
 Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed;
 And say at night, "Would God the day were here!"
 And say at dawn, "Would God the day were dead!"
 With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,
 And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,
 Pain for thy girdle, and sorrow upon thine head:
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bright colors. Thou shalt see
 Gold tarnished, and the gray above the green;
 And as the thing thou seest thy face shall be,
 And no more as the thing beforetime seen.
 And thou shalt say of mercy, "It hath been;"
 And living, watch the old lips and loves expire,
 And talking, tears shall take thy breath between:
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sad sayings. In that day
 Thou shalt tell all thy days and hours, and tell
 Thy times and ways and words of love, and say
 How one was dear, and one desirable,

And sweet was life to hear and sweet
to smell;
But now with lights reverse the old
hours retire,
And the last hour is shod with fire
from hell:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of four seasons. Rain in
spring,
White rain and wind among the ten-
der trees;
A summer of green sorrows gather-
ing;
Rank autumn in a mist of miseries,
With sad face set towards the year,
that sees
The charred ash drop out of the drop-
ping pyre,
And winter wan with many mala-
dies;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of dead faces. Out of sight
And out of love, beyond the reach of
hands,
Changed in the changing of the dark
and light,
They walk and weep about the bar-
ren lands
Where no seed is, nor any garner
stands,
Where in short breaths the doubtful
days respire,
And time's turned glass lets through
the sighing sands:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of much gladness. Life
and lust
Forsake thee, and the face of thy de-
light;
And underfoot the heavy hour strews
dust,
And overhead strange weathers burn
and bite;
And where the red was, lo the blood-
less white;
And where truth was, the likeness of a
liar;
And where day was, the likeness of
the night:
This is the end of every man's desire.

L'ENVOY.

Princes, and ye whom pleasure quick-
eneth,
Heed well this rhyme before your
pleasure tire;
For life is sweet, but after life is death.
This is the end of every man's desire.

BEFORE THE MIRROR.

(VERSES WRITTEN UNDER A PICTURE.)

INSCRIBED TO J. A. WHISTLER.

I.

WHITE rose in red rose-garden
Is not so white;
Snowdrops that plead for pardon
And pine for fright
Because the hard East blows
Over their maiden rows,
Grow not as this face grows from
pale to bright.

Behind the veil, forbidden,
Shut up from sight,
Love, is there sorrow hidden,
Is there delight?
Is joy thy dower or grief,
White rose of weary leaf,
Late rose whose life is brief, whose
loves are light?

Soft snows, that hard winds harden
Till each flake bite,
Fill all the flowerless garden
Whose flowers took flight
Long since when summer ceased,
And men rose up from feast,
And warm west wind grew east, and
warm day night.

II.

"Come snow, come wind or thunder
High up in air,
I watch my face, and wonder
At my bright hair;
Naught else exalts or grieves
The rose at heart, that heaves
With love of her own leaves and lips
that pair.

"She knows not loves that kissed her
 She knows not where :
 Art thou the ghost, my sister,
 White sister there,
 Am I the ghost, who knows ?
 My hand, a fallen rose,
 Lies snow-white on white snows, and
 takes no care.

"I cannot see what pleasures
 Or what pains were ;
 What pale new loves and treasures
 New years will bear ;
 What beam will fall, what shower,
 What grief or joy for dower :
 But one thing knows the flower, — the
 flower is fair."

III.

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,
 Since joys go by ;
 Sad, but not bent with sadness,
 Since sorrows die ;
 Deep in the gleaming glass
 She sees all past things pass,
 And all sweet life that was lie down
 and lie.

There glowing ghosts of flowers
 Draw down, draw nigh ;
 And wings of swift spent hours
 Take flight and fly ;
 She sees by formless gleams,
 She hears across cold streams,
 Dead mouths of many dreams that
 sing and sigh.

Face fallen and white throat lifted,
 With sleepless eye
 She sees old loves that drifted,
 She knew not why, —
 Old loves and faded fears
 Float down a stream that hears
 The flowing of all men's tears beneath
 the sky.

IN MEMORY OF WALTER
SAVAGE LANDOR.

BACK to the flower-town, side by side,
 The bright months bring,
 New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,
 Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,
 Filled full of sun ;
 All things come back to her, being
 free, —
 All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot
 Flowers that were dead
 Live, and old suns revive ; but not
 That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,
 Far north, I hear
 One face shall never turn to me
 As once this year ;

Shall never smile and turn and rest
 On mine as there,
 Nor one most sacred hand be prest
 Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half lin
 ger,
 Half run before ;
 The youngest to the oldest singer
 That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find
 Till all grief end,
 In holiest age our mightiest mind,
 Father and friend.

But thou, if any thing endure,
 If hope there be,
 O spirit that man's life left pure,
 Man's death set free,

Not with disdain of days that were
 Look earthward now :
 Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
 The imperial brow ;

Come back in sleep, for in the life
 Where thou art not
 We find none like thee. Time and strife
 And the world's lot

Move thee no more ; but love at least,
 And reverent heart,
 May move thee, royal and released,
 Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
 Receive and keep,
 Keep safe his dedicated dust,
 His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from far,
 Mix with thy name,
 As morning-star with evening-star,
 His faultless fame.

A SONG IN TIME OF ORDER. 1852.

PUSH hard across the sand,
 For the salt wind gathers breath;
 Shoulder and wrist and hand,
 Push hard as the push of death.

The wind is as iron that rings,
 The foam-heads loosen and flee;
 It swells and welters and swings,
 The pulse of the tide of the sea.

And up on the yellow cliff
 The long corn flickers and shakes;
 Push, for the wind holds stiff,
 And the gunwale dips and rakes.

Good hap to the fresh fierce weather,
 The quiver and beat of the sea!
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

Out to the sea with her there,
 Out with her over the sand,
 Let the kings keep the earth for their
 share!
 We have done with the sharers of
 land.

They have tied the world in a tether,
 They have bought over God with a
 fee;
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

We have done with the kisses that sting,
 The thief's mouth red from the feast,
 The blood on the hands of the king,
 And the lie at the lips of the priest.

Will they tie the winds in a tether,
 Put a bit in the jaws of the sea?
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

Let our flag run out straight in the wind!
 The old red shall be floated again
 When the ranks that are thin shall be
 thinned,
 When the names that were twenty are
 ten;

When the devil's riddle is mastered,
 And the galley-bench creaks with a
 Pope,
 We shall see Puonaparte the bastard
 Kick heels with his throat in a rope

While the shepherd sets wolves on his
 sheep,
 And the emperor halts his kine,
 While Shame is a watchman asleep,
 And Faith is a keeper of swine,—

Let the wind shake our flag like a
 feather,
 Like the plumes of the foam of the
 sea!

While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

All the world has its burdens to bear,
 From Cayenne to the Austrian whips.
 Forth, with the rain in our hair
 And the salt sweet foam in our lips;

In the teeth of the hard glad weather,
 In the blown wet face of the sea;
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

A SONG IN TIME OF REVOLU- TION. 1860.

The heart of the rulers is sick, and the
 high-priest covers h's head,
 For this is the song of the quick that is
 heard in the ears of the dead.

The poor and the halt and the blind are
 keen and mighty and fleet :
 Like the noise of the blowing of wind is
 the sound of the noise of their
 feet.

The wind has the sound of a laugh in
 the clamor of days and of deeds :
 The priests are scattered like chaff, and
 the rulers broken like reeds.

The high-priest sick from qualms, with
 his raiment bloodily dashed ;
 The thief with branded palms, and the
 liar with cheeks abashed.

They are smitten, they tremble greatly,
 they are pained for their pleasant
 things :
 For the house of the priests made state-
 ly, and the might in the mouth of
 the kings.

They are grieved and greatly afraid ;
 they are taken, they shall not flee :
 For the heart of the nations is made as
 the strength of the springs of the
 sea.

They were fair in the grace of gold, they
 walked with delicate feet ;
 They were clothed with the cunning of
 old, and the smell of their gar-
 ments was sweet.

For the breaking of gold in their hair
 they halt as a man made lame :
 They are utterly naked and bare ; their
 mouths are bitter with shame.

Wilt thou judge thy people now, O king
 that wast found most wise ?
 Wilt thou lie any more, O thou whose
 mouth is emptied of lies ?

Shall God make a pact with thee, till
 his hook be found in thy sides ?
 Wilt thou put back the time of the sea,
 or the place of the season of
 tides ?

Set a word in thy lips, to stand before
 God with a word in thy mouth :
 That ' the rain shall return in the land,
 and the tender dew after drouth."

But the arm of the elders is broken, their
 strength is unbound and undone :
 They wait for a sign of a token ; they
 cry, and there cometh none.

Their moan is in every place, the cry of
 them filleth the land :
 There is shame in the sight of their face,
 there is fear in the thews of their
 hand.

They are girdled about the reins with a
 curse for the girdle thereon :
 For the noise of the rending of chains,
 the face of their color is gone.

For the sound of the shouting of men,
 they are grievously stricken at
 heart :

They are smitten asunder with pain,
 their bones are smitten apart.

There is none of them all that is whole ;
 their lips gape open for breath :
 They are clothed with sickness of soul,
 and the shape of the shadow of
 death.

The wind is thwart in their feet ; it is
 full of the shouting of mirth ;
 As one shaketh the sides of a sheet, so
 it shaketh the ends of the earth.

The sword, the sword is made keen ; the
 iron has opened its mouth ;
 The corn is red that was green ; it is
 bound for the sheaves of the
 south.

The sound of a word was shed, the sound
 of the wind as a breath,
 In the ears of the souls that were dead,
 in the dust of the deepness of
 death ;

Where the face of the moon is taken,
the ways of the stars undone,
The light of the whole sky shaken, the
light of the face of the sun;

Where the waters are emptied and broken,
the waves of the waters are stayed;

Where God has bound for a token the
darkness that maketh afraid;

Where the sword was covered and hidden,
and dust had grown in its side,

A word came forth that was bidden, the
crying of one that cried:

The sides of the two-edged sword shall
be bare, and its mouth shall be red,

For the breath of the face of the Lord
that is felt in the bones of the dead.

TO VICTOR HUGO.

In the fair days when god
By man as godlike trod,
And each alike was Greek, alike was
free,

God's lightning spared, they said,
Alone the happier head
Whose laurels screened it; fruitless
grace for thee

To whom the high gods gave of right
Their thunders and their laurels and
their light.

Sunbeams and bays before
Our master's servants wore,
For these Apollo left in all men's lands;
But far from these ere now,
And watched with jealous brow,
Lay the blind lightnings shut between
God's hands,

And only loosed on slaves and kings
The terror of the tempest of their
wings.

Born in those younger years
That shone with storms of spears,

And shook in the wind blown from a
dead world's pyre,
When by her back-blown hair
Napoleon caught the fair
And fierce Republic with her feet of
fire,

And stayed with iron words and hands
Her flight, and freedom in a thousand
lands:

Thou sawest the tides of things
Close over heads of kings,
And thine hand felt the thunder, and to
thee

Laurels and lightnings were
As sunbeams and soft air
Mixed each in other, or as mist with sea
Mixed, or as memory with desire,
Or the lute's pulses with the louder lyre.

For thee man's spirit stood
Disrobed of flesh and blood,
And bare the heart of the most secret
hours;

And to thine hand more tame
Than birds in winter came
High hopes and unknown flying forms
of powers,

And from thy table fed, and sang
Till with the tune men's ears took fire
and rang.

Even all men's eyes and ears
With fiery sound and tears
Waxed hot, and cheeks caught flame
and eyelids light,

At those high songs of thine
That stung the sense like wine,
Or fell more soft than dew or snow by
night,

Or wailed as in some flooded cave
Sobs the strong broken spirit of a wave.

But we, our master, we
Whose hearts, uplift to thee,
Ache with the pulse of thy remembered
song, —

We ask not nor await
From the clinched hands of fate,
As thou, remission of the world's old
wrong;

Respite we ask not, nor release:
Freedom a man may have, he shall not
peace.

Though thy most fiery hope
 Storm heaven, to set wide ope
 The all-sought-for gate whence God or
 chance debars
 All feet of men, all eyes —
 The old night resumes her skies,
 Her hollow hiding-place of clouds and
 stars,
 Where naught save these is sure in
 sight,
 And, paven with death, our days are
 roofed with night.

One thing we can : to be
 Awhile, as men may, free ;
 But not by hope or pleasure the most
 stern
 Goddess, most awful-eyed,
 Sits, but on either side
 Sits sorrow and the wrath of hearts that
 burn,
 Sad faith that cannot hope or fear,
 And memory gray with many a flower-
 less year.

Not that in stranger's wise
 I lift not loving eyes
 To the fair foster-mother France, that
 gave
 Beyond the pale fleet foam
 Help to my sires and home ;
 Whose great sweet breast could shelter
 those and save
 Whom from her nursing breasts and
 hands
 Their land cast forth of old on gentler
 lands.

Not without thoughts that ache
 For theirs and for thy sake,
 I, born of exiles, hail thy banished head ;
 I, whose young song took flight
 Toward the great heat and light
 On me a child from thy far splendor
 shed,
 From thine high place of soul and
 song,
 Which, fallen on eyes yet feeble, made
 them strong.

Ah! not with lessening love
 For memories born hereof,

I look to that sweet mother-land, and
 see
 The old fields and fair full streams,
 And skies, but fled like dreams
 The feet of freedom and the thought of
 thee ;
 And all between the skies and graves
 The mirth of mockers and the shame
 of slaves.

She, killed with noisome air,
 Even she ! and still so fair,
 Who said, " Let there be freedom," and
 there was
 Freedom ; and as a lance
 The fiery eyes of France
 Touched the world's sleep, and as a
 sleep made pass
 Forth of men's heavier ears and eyes
 Smitten with fire and thunder from new
 skies.

Are they men's friends indeed
 Who watch them weep and bleed ?
 Because thou hast loved us, shall the
 gods love thee ?
 Thou, first of men and friend,
 Seest thou, even thou, the end ?
 Thou knowest what hath been, knowest
 thou what shall be ?
 Evils may pass and hopes endure ;
 But fate is dim, and all the gods obscure.

O nursed in airs apart,
 O poet highest of heart,
 Hast thou seen time, who hast seen so
 many things ?
 Are not the years more wise,
 More sad than keenest eyes,
 The years with soundless feet and sound-
 ing wings ?
 Passing we hear them not, but past
 The clamor of them thrills us, and their
 blast.

Thou art chief of us, and lord ;
 Thy song is as a sword
 Keen-edged and scented in the blade
 from flowers ;
 Thou art lord and king ; but we
 Lift younger eyes, and see
 Less of high hope, less light on wan
 dering hours ;

Hours that have borne men down so
long,
Seen the right fail, and watched uplift
the wrong.

But thine imperial soul,
As years and ruins roll
To the same end, and all things and all
dreams
With the same wreck and roar
Drift on the dim same shore,
Still in the bitter foam and brackish
streams
Tracks the fresh water-spring to be,
And sudden sweeter fountains in the
sea.

As once the high god bound
With many a rivet round
Man's savior, and with iron nailed him
through,
At the wild end of things,
Where even his own bird's wings
Flagged, whence the sea shone like a
drop of dew,
From Caucasus beheld below
Past fathoms of unfathomable snow:

So the strong God, the chance
Central of circumstance,
Still shows him exile who will not be
slave;
All thy great fame and thee
Girt by the dim strait sea
With multitudinous walls of wandering
wave;
Shows us our greatest from his throne
Fate-stricken, and rejected of his own.

Yea, he is strong, thou say'st,
A mystery many-faced,
The wild beasts know him, and the wild
birds flee;
The blind night sees him, death
Shrinks beaten at his breath,
And his right hand is heavy on the sea:
We know he hath made us, and is
king;
We know not if he care for any thing.

Thus much, no more, we know
He bade what is, be so,

Bade light be, and bade night be, one
by one;

Bade hope and fear, bade ill
And good redeem and kill,
Till all men be awarey of the sun,
And this world burn in its own flame,
And bear no witness longer of his name.

Yet though all this be thus,
Be those men praised of us
Who have loved and wrought and sor-
rowed, and not sinned
For fame or fear or gold,
Nor waxed for winter cold,
Nor changed for changes of the worldly
wind;

Praised above men of men be these,
Till this one world and work we know
shall cease.

Yea, one thing more than this,
We know that one thing is,
The splendor of a spirit without blame,
That not the laboring years
Blind-born, nor any fears,
Nor men nor any gods can tire or tame;
But purer power with fiery breath
Fills, and exalts above the gulfs of death.

Praised above men be thou,
Whose laurel-laden brow,
Made for the morning, droops not in the
night;
Praised and beloved, that none
Of all thy great things done
Flies higher than thy most equal spirit's
flight;
Praised, that nor doubt nor hope
could bend
Earth's loftiest head, found upright to
the end.

BEFORE DAWN.

SWEET life, if life were stronger,
Earth clear of years that wrong her,
Then two things might live longer,
Two sweeter things than they, —
Delight, the rootless flower,
And love, the bloomless bower;
Delight that lives an hour,
And love that lives a day.

From evensong to daytime,
 When April melts in Maytime,
 Love lengthens out his playtime,
 Love lessens breath by breath,
 And kiss by kiss grows older
 On listless throat or shoulder
 Turned sideways now, turned colder
 Than life that dreams of death.

This one thing once worth giving
 Life gave, and seemed worth living;
 Sin sweet beyond forgiving
 And brief beyond regret:
 To laugh and love together,
 And weave with foam and feather
 And wind and words the tether
 Our memories play with yet.

Ah! one thing worth beginning,
 One thread in life worth spinning,
 Ah, sweet, one sin worth sinning
 With all the whole soul's will;
 To lull you till one stilled you,
 To kiss you till one killed you,
 To feed you till one filled you,
 Sweet lips, if love could fill;

To hunt sweet Love, and lose him
 Between white arms and bosom,
 Between the bud and blossom,
 Between your throat and chin;
 To say of shame — what is it?
 Of virtue — we can miss it;
 Of sin — we can but kiss it,
 And it's no longer sin;

To feel the strong soul, stricken
 Through fleshly pulses, quicken
 Beneath swift sighs that thicken,
 Soft hands and lips that smite;
 Lips that no love can tire,
 With hands that sting like fire,
 Weaving the web Desire
 To snare the bird Delight.

But love so lightly plighted,
 Our love with torch unlighted,
 Paused near us unaffrighted,
 Who found and left him free:
 None, seeing us cloven in sunder,
 Will weep or laugh or wonder;
 Light love stands clear of thunder,
 And safe from winds at sea.

As, when late larks give warning
 Of dying lights and dawning,
 Night murmurs to the morning,
 "Lie still, O love, lie still;"
 And half her dark limbs cover
 The white limbs of her lover,
 With amorous plumes that hover
 And fervent lips that chill;

As scornful day represses
 Night's void and vain caresses,
 And from her cloudier tresses
 Unwinds the gold of his,
 With limbs from limbs dividing,
 And breath by breath subsiding;
 For love has no abiding,
 But dies before the kiss:

So hath it been, so be it;
 For who shall live and flee it?
 But look that no man see it
 Or hear it unaware;
 Lest all who love and choose him
 See Love, and so refuse him;
 For all who find him lose him,
 But all have found him fair.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

HERE, where the world is quiet,
 Here, where all trouble seems
 Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
 In doubtful dreams of dreams;
 I watch the green field growing
 For reaping folk and sowing,
 For harvest time and mowing,
 A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
 And men that laugh and weep,
 Of what may come hereafter
 For men that sow to reap:
 I am weary of days and hours,
 Blown buds of barren flowers,
 Desires and dreams and powers,
 And every thing but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
 And far from eye or ear
 Wan waves and wet winds labor,
 Weak ships and spirits steer;

They drive adrift, and whither
 They wot not who make thither;
 But no such winds blow hither,
 And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
 No heather-flower or vine,
 But bloomless buds of poppies,
 Green grapes of Proserpine,
 Pale beds of blowing rushes
 Where no leaf blooms or blushes
 Save this whereout she crushes
 For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
 In fruitless fields of corn,
 They bow themselves and slumber
 All night till light is born;
 And like a soul belated,
 In hell and heaven unmated,
 By cloud and mist abated
 Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
 He too with death shall dwell,
 Nor wake with wings in heaven,
 Nor weep for pains in hell;
 Though one were fair as roses,
 His beauty clouds and closes;
 And well though love reposes,
 In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
 Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
 Who gathers all things mortal
 With cold immortal hands;
 Her languid lips are sweeter
 Than love's who fears to greet her
 To men that mix and meet her
 From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
 She waits for all men born;
 Forgets the earth her mother,
 The life of fruits and corn;
 And spring and seed and swallow
 Take wing for her, and follow
 Where summer song rings hollow,
 And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
 The old loves with wearier wings;

And all dead years draw thither,
 And all disastrous things;
 Dead dreams of days forsaken,
 Blind buds that snows have shaken
 Wild leaves that winds have taken
 Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
 And joy was never sure;
 To-day will die to-morrow;
 Time stoops to no man's lure;
 And love, grown faint and fretful,
 With lips but half regretful
 Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
 Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
 From hope and fear set free,
 We thank with brief thanksgiving
 Whatever gods may be
 That no life lives forever;
 That dead men rise up never;
 That even the weariest river
 Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
 Nor any change of light;
 Nor sound of waters shaken,
 Nor any sound or sight;
 Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
 Nor days nor things diurnal:
 Only the sleep eternal
 In an eternal night.

LOVE AT SEA.

WE are in love's land to-day:
 Where shall we go?
 Love, shall we start or stay,
 Or sail or row?
 There's many a wind and way,
 And never a May but May:
 We are in love's hand to-day;
 Where shall we go?

Our land-wind is the breath
 Of sorrows kissed to death,
 And joys that were;
 Our ballast is a rose;
 Our way lies where God knows,
 And love knows where.
 We are in love's hand to-day—

Our seamen are fledged Loves,
 Our masts are bills of doves,
 Our decks fine gold;
 Our ropes are dead maids' hair,
 Our stores are love-shafts fair
 And manifold.
 We are in love's land to-day —

Where shall we land you, sweet?
 On fields of strange men's feet,
 Or fields near home?
 Or where the fire-flowers blow,
 Or where the flowers of snow,
 Or flowers of foam?
 We are in love's hand to-day —

Land me, she says, where love
 Shows but one shaft, one dove,
 One heart, one hand.
 — A shore like that, my dear,
 Lies where no man will steer,
 No maiden land.
Imitated from Théophile Gautier.

APRIL.

FROM THE FRENCH OF THE VIDAME
 DE CHARTRES. 12 — ?

WHEN the fields catch flower,
 And the underwood is green,
 And from bower unto bower
 The songs of the birds begin,
 I sing with sighing between.
 When I laugh and sing,
 I am heavy at heart for my sin;
 I am sad in the spring
 For my love that I shall not win,
 For a foolish thing.

This profit I have of my woe,
 That I know, as I sing,
 I know he will needs have it so
 Who is master and king,
 Who is lord of the spirit of spring.
 I will serve her, and will not spare
 Till her pity awake
 Who is good, who is pure, who is fair,
 Even her for whose sake
 Love hath ta'en me and slain unaware.

O my lord, O Love,
 I have laid my life at thy feet;
 Have thy will thereof,
 Do as it please thee with it,
 For what shall please thee is sweet.
 I am come unto thee
 To do thee service, O Love!
 Yet cannot I see
 Thou wilt take any pity thereof,
 Any mercy on me.

But the grace I have long time sought
 Comes never in sight,
 If in her it abideth not,
 Through thy mercy and might,
 Whose heart is the world's delight.
 Thou hast sworn without fail I shall die,
 For my heart is set
 On what hurts me, I wot not why,
 But cannot forget
 What I love, what I sing for and sigh.

She is worthy of praise;
 For this grief of her giving is worth
 All the joy of my days
 That lie between death's day and
 birth,
 All the lordship of things upon earth.
 Nay, what have I said?
 I would not be glad if I could:
 My dream and my dread
 Are of her, and for her sake I would
 That my life were fled.

Lo, sweet, if I durst not pray to you,
 Then were I dead;
 If I sang not a little to say to you,
 (Could it be said)
 O my love, how my heart would be
 fed;
 Ah, sweet who hast hold of my heart,
 For thy love's sake I live;
 Do but tell me, ere either depart,
 What a lover may give
 For a woman so fair as thou art.

The lovers that disbelieve,
 False rumors shall grieve
 And evil-speaking shall part.

BEFORE PARTING.

A MONTH or twain to live on honey-comb

Is pleasant; but one tires of scented time,

Cold sweet recurrence of accepted rhyme,

And that strong purple under juice and foam

Where the wine's heart has burst;
Nor feel the latter kisses like the first.

Once yet, this poor one time: I will not pray

Even to change the bitterness of it,
The bitter taste ensuing on the sweet,
To make your tears fall where your soft hair lay

All blurred and heavy in some perfumed wise

Over my face and eyes.

And yet who knows what end the scythèd wheat

Makes of its foolish poppies' mouths of red?

These were not sown, these are not harvested,

They grow a month, and are cast under feet,

And none has care thereof,
As none has care of a divided love.

I know each shadow of your lips by rote,

Each change of love in eyelids and eyebrows;

The fashion of fair temples tremulous

With tender blood, and color of your throat;

I know not how love is gone out of this,
Seeing that all was his.

Love's likeness there endures upon all these:

But out of these one shall not gather love.

Day hath not strength nor the night shade enough

To make love whole, and fill his lips with ease,

As some bee-built cell
Feels at filled lips the heavy honey swell.

I know not how this last month leaves your hair

Less full of purple color and hid spice,
And that luxurious trouble of closed eyes

Is mixed with meaner shadow and waste care;

And love, kissed out by pleasure, seems not yet

Worth patience to regret.

THE SUNDEW.

A LITTLE marsh-plant, yellow green,
And pricked at lip with tender red.

Tread close, and either way you tread
Some faint black water jets between
Lest you should bruise the curious head

A live thing may be; who shall know?

The summer knows and suffers it;

For the cool moss is thick and sweet

Each side, and saves the blossom so

That it lives out the long June heat.

The deep scent of the heather burns

About it: breathless though it be,

Bow down and worship; more than we

Is the least flower whose life returns,

Least weed renascent in the sea.

We are vexed and cumbered in earth's sight

With wants, with many memories:

These see their mother what she is,

Glad-growing, till August leave more bright

The apple-colored cranberries.

Wind blows and bleaches the strong grass,

Blown all one way to shelter it

From trample of strayed kine, with feet

Felt heavier than the moorhen was,

Strayed up past patches of wild wheat.

You call it sundew : how it grows,
 If with its color it have breath,
 If life taste sweet to it, if death
 Pain its soft petal, no man knows :
 Man has no sight or sense that saith.

My sundew, grown of gentle days,
 In these green miles the spring begun
 Thy growth ere April had half done
 With the soft secret of her ways,
 Or June made ready for the sun.

O red-lipped mouth of marsh-flower !
 I have a secret halved with thee.
 The name that is love's name to me
 Thou knowest, and the face of her
 Who is my festival to see.

The hard sun, as thy petals knew,
 Colored the heavy moss-water :
 Thou wert not worth green midsummer,
 Nor fit to live to August blue,
 O sundew, not remembering her.

AN INTERLUDE.

IN the greenest growth of the Maytime,
 I rode where the woods were wet,
 Between the dawn and the daytime :
 The spring was glad that we met.

There was something the season wanted,
 Though the ways and the woods smelt
 sweet, —
 The breath at your lips that panted,
 The pulse of the grass at your feet.

You came, and the sun came after,
 And the green grew golden above ;
 And the flag-flowers lightened with
 laughter,
 And the meadow-sweet shook with
 love.

Your feet in the full-grown grasses
 Moved soft as a weak wind blows :
 You passed me as April passes,
 With face made out of a rose.

By the stream where the stems were
 slender,
 Your bright foot paused at the sedge :

It might be to watch the tender
 Light leaves in the springtime hedge,

On boughs that the sweet month
 blanches
 With flowery frost of May ;
 It might be a bird in the branches ;
 It might be a thorn in the way.

I waited to watch you linger
 With foot drawn back from the dew,
 Till a sunbeam straight like a finger
 Struck sharp through the leaves at
 you.

And a bird overhead sang *Follow*,
 And a bird to the right sang *Here* ;
 And the arch of the leaves was hol-
 low,
 And the meaning of May was clear.

I saw where the sun's hand pointed,
 I knew what the bird's note said :
 By the dawn and the dewfall anointed,
 You were queen by the gold on your
 head.

As the glimpse of a burnt-out ember
 Recalls a regret of the sun,
 I remember, forget, and remember
 What Love saw done and undone.

I remember the way we parted,
 The day and the way we met :
 You hoped we were both broken-
 hearted,
 And knew we should both forget.

And May with her world in flower
 Seemed still to murmur and smile
 As you murmured and smiled for an
 hour :
 I saw you turn at the stile.

A hand like a white wood-blossom
 You lifted, and waved, and passed,
 With head hung down to the bosom,
 And pale, as it seemed, at last.

And the best and the worst of this is,
 That neither is most to blame,
 If you've forgotten my kisses,
 And I've forgotten your name.

HENDECASYLLABICS.

IN the month of the long decline of
 roses,
 I, beholding the summer dead before
 me,
 Set my face to the sea, and journeyed
 silent,
 Gazing eagerly where above the sea
 mark
 Flame as fierce as the fervid eyes of
 lions
 Half divided the eyelids of the sun-
 set;
 Till I heard as it were a noise of waters
 Moving tremulous under feet of angels
 Multitudinous, out of all the heavens;
 Knew the fluttering wind, the fluttered
 foliage,
 Shaken fitfully, full of sound and
 shadow;
 And saw, trodden upon by noiseless
 angels,
 Long mysterious reaches fed with
 moonlight,
 Sweet sad straits in a soft subsiding
 channel,
 Blown about by the lips of winds I knew
 not,
 Winds not born in the north nor any
 quarter,
 Winds not warm with the south nor any
 sunshine;
 Heard between them a voice of exulta-
 tion,
 "Lo, the summer is dead, the sun is
 faded,
 Even like as a leaf the year is withered,
 All the fruits of the day from all her
 branches
 Gathered, neither is any left to gather.
 All the flowers are dead, the tender
 blossoms,
 All are taken away; the season wasted,
 Like an ember among the fallen ashes.
 Now with light of the winter days, with
 moonlight,
 Light of snow, and the bitter light of
 hoar-frost,
 We bring flowers that fade not after
 autumn,
 Pale white chaplets and crowns of lat-
 ter seasons,

Fair false leaves (but the summer leaves
 were fals^{er}),
 Woven under the eyes of stars and
 planets
 When low light was upon the windy
 reaches
 Where the flower of foam was blown,
 a lily
 Dropt among the sonorous fruitless
 furrows
 And green fields of the sea that make
 no pasture:
 Since the winter begins, the weeping
 winter,
 All whose flowers are tears, and round
 his temples
 Iron blossom of frost is bound forever."

SAPPHICS.

ALL the night sleep came not upon my
 eyelids,
 Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed
 a feather,
 Yet with lips shut close and with eyes
 of iron
 Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision
 Came without sleep over the seas and
 touched me,
 Softly touched mine eyelids and lips;
 and I too,
 Full of the vision,

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,
 Saw the hair unbound and the feet
 unsandalled
 Shine as fire of sunset on western
 waters;
 Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves
 that drew her,
 Looking always, looking with necks
 reverted,
 Back to Lesbos, back to the hills where
 under
 Shone Mitylene;

Heard the flying feet of the Loves be-
hind her
Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,
As the thunder flung from the strong
unclosing
Wings of a great wind.

So the goddess fled from her place, with
awful
Sound of feet and thunder of wings
around her;
While behind a clamor of singing
women
Severed the twilight.

Ah the singing, ah the delight, the pas-
sion!
All the Loves wept, listening; sick with
anguish,
Stood the crowned nine Muses about
Apollo;
Fear was upon them,

While the tenth sang wonderful things
they knew not.
Ah the tenth, the Lesbian! the nine
were silent,
None endured the sound of her song
for weeping;
Laurel by laurel,

Faded all their crowns; but about her
forehead,
Round her woven tresses and ashen
temples
White as dead snow, paler than grass
in summer,
Ravaged with kisses,

Shone a light of fire as a crown for-
ever.
Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite
Paused, and almost wept; such a song
was that song,
Yea, by her name too

Called her, saying, "Turn to me, O my
Sappho!"
Yet she turned her face from the Love's,
she saw not
Tears for laughter darken immortal eye-
lids,
Heard not about her

Fearful fitful wings of the doves de-
parting,
Saw not how the bosom of Aphrodite
Shook with weeping, saw not her
shaken raiment,
Saw not her hands wrung;

Saw the Lesbians kissing across their
smitten
Lutes with lips more sweet than the
sound of lute-strings,
Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand
her chosen,
Fairer than all men;

Only saw the beautiful lips and fingers,
Full of songs and kisses and little
whispers,
Full of music; only beheld among them
Soar, as a bird soars

Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,
Made of perfect sound and exceeding
passion,
Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thun-
ders,
Clothed with the wind's wings.

Then rejoiced she, laughing with love,
and scattered
Roses, awful roses of holy blossom;
Then the Loves thronged sadly with
hidden faces
Round Aphrodite,

Then the Muses, stricken at heart, were
silent;
Yea, the gods waxed pale; such a song
was that song.
All reluctant, all with a fresh repulsion,
Fled from before her.

All withdrew long since, and the land
was barren,
Full of fruitless women and music only.
Now perchance, when winds are as-
suaged at sunset,
Lulled at the dewfall,

By the gray sea-side, unassuaged, un-
heard of,
Unbeloved, unseen in the ebb of twi-
light,

Ghosts of outcast women return lament-
ing,
Purged not in Lethe,

Clothed about with flame and with
tears, and singing
Songs that move the heart of the shaken
heaven,
Songs that break the heart of the earth
with pity,
Hearing, to hear them.

AT ELEUSIS.

MEN of Eleusis, ye that with long
staves
Sit in the market-houses, and speak
words
Made sweet with wisdom as the rare
wine is
Thickened with honey; and ye sons of
these
Who in the glad thick streets go up
and down
For pastime or grave traffic or mere
chance;
And all fair women having rings of gold
On hands or hair; and chiefest over
these
I name you, daughters of this man the
king,
Who dipping deep smooth pitchers of
pure brass
Under the bubbled wells, till each
round lip
Stooped with loose gurgle of waters in-
coming,
Found me an old sick woman, lamed
and lean,
Beside a growth of builded olive-boughs
Whence multiplied thick song of thick-
plumed throats—
Also wet tears filled up my hollow
hands
By reason of my crying into them—
And pitied me; for as cold water ran
And washed the pitchers full from lip
to lip,
So washed both eyes full the strong salt
of tears.
And ye put water to my mouth, made
sweet

With brown hill-berries: so in time I
spoke,
And gathered my loose knees from
under me.
Moreover, in the broad, fair halls this
month
Have I found space and bountiful abode
To please me. I Demeter speak of
this,
Who am the mother and the mate
of things:
For as ill men by drugs or singing
words
Shut the doors inward of the narrow
womb
Like a lock bolted with round iron
through,
Thus I shut up the body and sweet
mouth
Of all soft pasture and the tender land,
So that no seed can enter in by it,
Though one sow thickly, nor some
grain get out
Past the hard clods men cleave and
bite with steel
To widen the sealed lips of them for
use.
None of you is there in the peopled
street
But knows how all the dry-drawn fur-
rows ache
With no green spot made count of in
the black;
How the wind finds no comfortable
grass,
Nor is assuaged with bud nor breath
of herbs;
And in hot autumn, when ye house the
stacks,
All fields are helpless in the sun, all
trees
Stand as a man stripped out of all but
skin.
Nevertheless, ye sick have help to get
By means and stablished ordinance of
God;
For God is wiser than a good man is.
But never shall new grass be sweet in
earth
Till I get righted of my wound and
wrong
By changing counsel of ill-minded Zeus
For of all other gods is none save me

Clothed with like power to build and
break the year.

I make the lesser green begin, when
spring

Touches not earth but with one fearful
foot ;

And as a careful gilder with grave art
Soberly colors and completes the face,
Mouth, chin, and all, of some sweet
work in stone,

I carve the shapes of grass and tender
corn,

And color the ripe edges and long
spikes

With the red increase and the grace of
gold.

No tradesman in soft wools is cunninger
To kill the secret of the fat white
fleece

With stains of blue and purple wrought
in it.

Three moons were made, and three
moons burnt away,

While I held journey hither out of
Crete,

Comfortless, tended by grave Hecate,
Whom my wound stung with double
iron point ;

For all my face was like a cloth wrung
out

With close and weeping wrinkles, and
both lids

Sodden with salt continuance of tears.
For Hades and the sidelong will of
Zeus,

And that lame wisdom that has writen
feet,

Cunning, begotten in the bed of Shame,
These three took evil will at me, and
made

Such counsel, that when time got wing
to fly

This Hades out of summer and low
fields

Forced the bright body of Persephone :
Out of pure grass, where she lying
down, red flowers

Made their sharp little shadows on her
sides,

Pale heat, pale color on pale maiden
flesh, —

And chill water slid over her reddening
feet,

Killing the throbs in their soft blood ;
and birds,

Perched next her elbow, and pecking at
her hair,

Stretched their necks more to see her
than even to sing.

A sharp thing is it I have need to say ;
For Hades holding both white wrists of
hers

Unloosed the girdle, and with knot by
knot

Bound her between his wheels upon
the seat,

Bound her pure body, holiest yet and
dear

To me and God as always, clothed
about

With blossoms loosened, as her knees
went down,

Let fall as she let go of this and this
By tens and twenties tumbled to her
feet,

White waifs or purple of the pasturage.
Therefore with only going up and down

My feet were wasted, and the gracious
air,

To me uncomfortable and dun, became
As weak smoke blowing in the under-
world.

And finding in the process of ill days
What part had Zeus herein, and how as
mate

He coped with Hades, yokefellow in
sin,

I set my lips against the meat of gods,
And drank not, neither ate or slept, in
heaven.

Nor in the golden greeting of their
mouths

Did ear take note of me, nor eye at all
Track my feet going in the ways of
them.

Like a great fire on some strait slip of
land

Between two washing inlets of wet sea
That burns the grass up to each lip of
beach,

And strengthens, waxing in the growth
of wind,

So burnt my soul in me at heaven and
earth,

Each way a ruin and a hungry plague,
Visible evil ; nor could any night

Put cool between mine eyelids, nor the
 sun
 With competence of gold fill out my
 want.
 Yea, so my flame burnt up the grass
 and stones,
 Shone to the salt-white edges of thin sea,
 Distempered all the gracious work, and
 made
 Sick change, unseasonable increase of
 days
 And scant avail of seasons; for by this
 The fair gods faint in hollow heaven:
 there comes
 No taste of burnings of the twofold fat
 To leave their palates smooth, nor in
 their lips
 Soft rings of smoke, and weak scent
 wandering;
 All cattle waste and rot, and their ill
 smell
 Grows always from the lank, unsavory
 flesh
 That no man slays for offering; the sea
 And waters moved beneath the heath
 and corn
 Preserve the people of fin-twinkling
 fish,
 And river-flies feed thick upon the
 smooth;
 But all earth over is no man or bird
 (Except the sweet race of the kingfisher)
 That lacks not, and is wearied with
 much loss.
 Meantime, the purple inward of the
 house
 Was softened with all grace of scent
 and sound
 In ear and nostril perfecting my praise;
 Faint grape-flowers and cloven honey-
 cake
 And the just grain with dues of the
 shed salt
 Made me content: yet my hand loos-
 ened not
 Its gripe upon your harvest all year
 long.
 While I, thus woman-muffled in wan
 flesh
 And waste externals of a perished face,
 Preserved the levels of my wrath and
 love
 Patiently ruled; and with soft offices

Cooled the sharp noons, and busied the
 warm nights
 In care of this my choice, this child my
 choice,
 Triptolemus, the king's selected son:
 That this fair yearlong body, which
 hath grown
 Strong with strange milk upon the
 mortal lip
 And nerved with half a god, might so
 increase
 Outside the bulk and the bare scope of
 man;
 And waxen over large to hold within
 Base breath of yours, and this impover-
 ished air,
 I might exalt him past the flame of
 stars,
 The limit and walled reach of the great
 world.
 Therefore my breast made common to
 his mouth
 Immortal savors, and the taste whereat
 Twice their hard life strains out the
 colored veins,
 And twice its brain confirms the narrow
 shell.
 Also at night, unwinding cloth from
 cloth
 As who unhusks an almond to the white,
 And pastures curiously the purer taste,
 I bared the gracious limbs and the soft
 feet,
 Unswaddled the weak hands, and in
 mid-ash
 Laid the sweet flesh of either feeble
 side,
 More tender for impressure of some
 touch
 Than wax to any pen; and lit around
 Fire, and made crawl the white, worm-
 shapen flame,
 And leap in little angers spark by
 spark
 At head at once, and feet; and the
 faint hair
 Hissed with rare sprinkles in the closer
 curl,
 And like sealed oarage of a keen thin
 fish
 In sea-water, so in pure fire his feet
 Struck out, and the flame bit not in his
 flesh,

But like a kiss it curled his lip, and
 heat
 Fluttered his eyelids; so each night I
 blew
 The hot ash red to purge him to full
 god.
 Ill is it when fear hungers in the soul
 For painful food, and chokes thereon,
 being fed;
 And ill slant eyes interpret the straight
 sun,
 But in their scope its white is wried to
 black:
 By the queen Metaneira mean I this;
 For with sick wrath upon her lips and
 heart,
 Narrowing with fear the spleenful pas-
 sages,
 She thought to thread this web's fine
 ravel out,
 Nor leave her shuttle split in combing
 it;
 Therefore she stole on us, and with
 hard sight
 Peered, and stooped close; then with
 pale, open mouth
 As the fire smote her in the eyes be-
 tween
 Cried, and the child's laugh sharply
 shortening
 As fire doth under rain, fell off; the
 flame
 Writhed once all through and died, and
 in thick dark
 Tears fell from mine on the child's
 weeping eyes,
 Eyes dispossessed of strong inheritance
 And mortal fallen anew. Who not the
 less
 From bud of beard to pale-gray flower
 of hair
 Shall wax vine-wise to a lordly vine,
 whose grapes
 Bleed the red, heavy blood of swoln
 soft wine,
 Subtle with sharp leaves' intricacy, until
 Full of white years and blossom of
 hoary days
 I take him perfected; for whose one
 sake
 I am thus gracious to the least who
 stands
 Filleted with white wool and girt upon

As he whose prayer endures upon the
 lip
 And falls not waste: wherefore let sac-
 rifice
 Burn and run red in all the wider ways,
 Seeing I have sworn by the pale tem-
 ples' band
 And popped hair of gold Persephone
 Sad-tressed and pleached low down
 about her brows,
 And by the sorrow in her lips, and death
 Her dumb and mournful-mouthed min-
 ister,
 My word for you is eased of its harsh
 weight
 And doubled with soft promise; and
 your king
 Triptolemus, this Celeus dead and
 swathed
 Purple and pale for golden burial,
 Shall be your helper in my services,
 Dividing earth and reaping fruits there-
 of
 In fields where wait, well-girt, well-
 wreathen, all
 The heavy-handed seasons all year
 through;
 Saving the choice of warm spear-headed
 grain,
 And stooping sharp to the slant-sided
 share
 All beasts that furrow the remeasured
 land
 With their bowed necks of burden
 equable.

AUGUST.

THERE were four apples on the bough,
 Half gold, half red, that one might know
 The blood was ripe inside the core;
 The color of the leaves was more
 Like stems of yellow corn that grow
 Through all the gold June meadow's
 floor.

The warm smell of the fruit was good
 To feed on, and the split green wood,
 With all its bearded lips and stains
 Of mosses in the cloven veins,
 Most pleasant, if one lay or stood
 In sunshine or in happy rains.

There were four apples on the tree,
Red stained through gold, that all might
see

The sun went warm from core to rind;
The green leaves made the summer
blind

In that soft place they kept for me
With golden apples shut behind.

The leaves caught gold across the sun,
And where the bluest air begun,
Thirsted for song to help the heat;
As I to feel my lady's feet
Draw close before the day were done:
Both lips grew dry with dreams of it.

In the mute August afternoon
They trembled to some undertune
Of music in the silver air:
Great pleasure was it to be there
Till green turned duskier, and the moon
Colored the corn-sheaves like gold hair.

That August time it was delight
To watch the red moons wane to white
'Twixt gray seamed stems of apple-
trees:

A sense of heavy harmonies
Grew on the growth of patient night,
More sweet than shapen music is.

But some three hours before the moon
The air, still eager from the noon,
Flagged after heat, not wholly dead;
Against the stem I leant my head;
The color soothed me like a tune,
Green leaves all round the gold and red.

I lay there till the warm smell grew
More sharp, when flecks of yellow dew
Between the round ripe leaves had
blurred

The rind with stain and wet: I heard
A wind that blew and breathed and blew,
Too weak to alter its one word.

The wet leaves next the gentle fruit
Felt smother, and the brown tree-root
Felt the mould warmer: I, too, felt
(As water feels the slow gold melt
Right through it when the day burns
mute)

The peace of time wherein love dwelt.

There were four apples on the tree,
Gold stained on red, that all might see
The sweet blood filled them to the core:
The color of her hair is more
Like stems of fair faint gold, that be
Mown from the harvest's middle-floor.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.¹

THREE damsels in the queen's chamber,
The queen's mouth was most fair:
She spake a word of God's mother
As the combs went in her hair.
Mary that is of might,
Bring us to thy Son's sight.

They held the gold combs out from her.
A span's length off her head:
She sang this song of God's mother
And of her bearing-bed.
Mary most full of grace,
Bring us to thy Son's face.

When she sat at Joseph's hand,
She looked against her side;
And either way from the short silk band
Her girdle was all wried.
Mary that all good may,
Bring us to thy Son's way.

Mary had three women for her bed:
The twain were maidens clean;
The first of them had white and red,
The third had riven green.
Mary that is so sweet,
Bring us to thy Son's feet.

She had three women for her hair:
Two were gloved soft and shod;
The third had feet and fingers bare,
She was the likest God.
Mary that wieldeth land,
Bring us to thy Son's hand.

She had three women for her ease:
The twain were good women;
The first two were the two Maries,
The third was Magdalen.
Mary that perfect is,
Bring us to thy Son's kiss.

¹ Suggested by a drawing of Mr. D. G. Rossetti's

Joseph had three workmen in his stall,
 To serve him well upon :
 The first of them were Peter and Paul,
 The third of them was John.
 Mary, God's handmaiden,
 Bring us to thy Son's ken.

"If your child be none other man's,
 But if it be very mine,
 The bedstead shall be gold two spans,
 The bedfoot silver fine."
 Mary that made God mirth,
 Bring us to thy Son's birth.

"If the child be some other man's,
 And if it be none of mine,
 The manger shall be straw two spans,
 Betwixen kine and kine."
 Mary that made sin cease,
 Bring us to thy Son's peace

Christ was born upon this wise :
 It fell on such a night,
 Neither with sounds of psalteries,
 Nor with fire for light.
 Mary that is God's spouse,
 Bring us to thy Son's house.

The star came out upon the east
 With a great sound and sweet :
 Kings gave gold to make him feast,
 And myrrh for him to eat.
 Mary, of thy sweet mood,
 Bring us to thy Son's good.

He had two handmaids at his head,
 One handmaid at his feet :
 The twain of them were fair and red,
 The third one was right sweet.
 Mary that is most wise,
 Bring us to thy Son's eyes. Amen.

THE MASQUE OF QUEEN BERSABE

A MIRACLE-PLAY.

King David. Knights mine, all that
 be in hall,
 I have a council to you all,
 Because of this thing God lets fall
 Among us for a sign.

For some days hence as I did eat
 From kingly dishes my good meat,
 There flew a bird between my feet
 As red as any wine.
 This bird had a long bill of red,
 And a gold ring above his head ;
 Long time he sat and nothing said,
 Put softly down his neck, and fed
 From the gilt patens fine :
 And as I marvelled at the last,
 He shut his two keen eyen fast,
 And suddenly woxe big and brast
 Ere one should tell to nine.

Primus Miles. Sir, note this that I
 will say :
 That Lord who maketh corn with hay,
 And morrows each of yesterday,
 He hath you in his hand.

Secundus Miles (Paganus quidam).
 By Satan I hold no such thing ;
 For if wine swell within a king
 Whose ears for drink are hot and ring,
 The same shall dream of wine-bibbing
 Whilst he can lie or stand.

Queen Bersabe. Peace now, lords, for
 God's head.
 Ye chirk as starlings that be fed,
 And gape as fishes newly dead :
 The devil put your bones to bed,
 Lo, this is all to say.

Secundus Miles. By Mahound, lords,
 I have good will
 This devil's bird to wring and spill ;
 For now meseems our game goes ill,
 Ye have scant hearts to play.

Tertius Miles. Lo, sirs, this word is
 there said,
 That Urias the knight is dead
 Through some ill craft : by Poullis head,
 I doubt his blood hath made so red
 This bird that flew from the queen's bed
 Whereof ye have such fear.

King David. Yea, my good knave,
 and is it said
 That I can raise men from the dead ?
 By God I think to have his head
 Who saith words of my lady's bed
 For any thief to hear.
Et percutiat eum in capite.

Queen Bersabe. I wis men shall spit
at me,
And say it were but right for thee
That one should hang thee on a tree.
Ho! it were a fair thing to see
The big stones bruise her false body;
Fie! who shall see her dead?

King David. I rede you have no fear
of this,
For as ye wot, the first good kiss
I had must be the last of his;
Now are ye queen of mine, I wis,
And lady of a house that is
Full rich of meat and bread.

Primus Miles. I bid you make good
cheer to be
So fair a queen as all men see.
And hold us for your lieges free:
By Peter's soul that hath the key,
Ye have good hap of it.

Secundus Miles. I would that he were
hanged and dead
Who hath no joy to see your head
With gold about it, barred on red:
I hold him as a sow of lead
That is so scant of wit.

Tunc dicat NATHAN propheta. O
king! I have a word to thee:
The child that is in Bersabe
Shall wither without light to see;
This word is come of God by me
For sin that ye have done.
Because herein ye did not right,
To take the fair one lamb to smite
That was of Urias the knight:
Ye wist he had but one.
Full many sheep I wot ye had,
And many women, when ye bade
To do your will and keep you glad;
And a good crown about your head
With gold to show thereon.
This Urias had one poor house,
With low-barred latoun shot-windows,
And scant of corn to fill a mouse;
And rusty basnets for his brows,
To wear them to the bone.
Yea, the roofs also, as men sain,
Were thin to hold against the rain:
Therefore what rushes were there lain

Grew wet withouten foot of men;
The stancheons were all gone in twain
As sick man's flesh is gone.
Nathless he had great joy to see
The long hair of this Bersabe
Fall round her lap and round her knee
Even to her small soft feet, that be
Shod now with crimson royally,
And covered with clean gold.
Likewise great joy he had to kiss
Her throat, where now the scarlet is
Against her little chin, I wis,
That then was but cold.
No scarlet then her kirtle had,
And little gold about it sprad;
But her red mouth was always glad
To kiss, albeit the eyes were sad
With love they had to hold.

Secundus Miles. How! old thief, thy
wits are lame;
To clip such it is no shame;
I rede you in the devil's name,
Ye come not here to make men game:
By Termagaunt that maketh grame,
I shall to-bete thine head.

Hic Diabolus capiat eum.
This knave hath sharp fingers, per fay;
Mahound you thank and keep away,
And give you good knees to pray;
What man hath no lust to play,
The devil wring his ears, I say:
There is no more but weilaway,
For now am I dead.

King David. Certes his mouth is
wried and black,
Full little pence be in his sack:
This devil hath him by the back,
It is no boot to lie.

Nathan. Sitteth now still, and leane
of me
A little while, and ye shall see
The face of God's strength presently.
All queens made as this Bersabe,
All that were fair and foul ye be,
Come hither; it am I.
Et hic omnes cantabunt.

Herodias. I am the queen Herodias.
This headband of my temples was
King Herod's gold band wovon me:

This broken dry staff in my hand
Was the queen's staff of a great land
Betwixen Perse and Samarie.
For that one dancing of my feet,
The fire is come in my green wheat,
From one sea to the other sea.

Aholibah. I am the queen Aholibah.
My lips kissed dumb the word of *Ah*
Sighed on strange lips grown sick
thereby.

God wrought to me my royal bed :
The inner work thereof was red,
The outer work was ivory.
My mouth's heat was the heat of flame
For lust towards the kings that came
With horsemen riding royally.

Cleopatra. I am the queen of Ethiope.
Love bade my kissing eyelids ope,
That men beholding might praise love;
My hair was wonderful and curled;
My lips held fast the mouth o' the world
To spoil the strength and speech
thereof.

The latter triumph in my breath
Bowed down the beaten brows of death,
Ashamed they had not wrath enough.

Abihail. I am the queen of Tyrians.
My hair was glorious for twelve spans,
That dried to loose dust afterward.
My stature was a strong man's length :
My neck was like a place of strength
Built with white walls, even and hard.
Like the first noise of rain leaves catch
One from another, snatch by snatch,
Is my praise, hissed against and
marred.

Azubah. I am the queen of Amorites.
My face was like a place of lights
With multitudes at festival.
The glory of my gracious brows
Was like God's house made glorious
With colors upon either wall.
Between my brows and hair there was
A white space like a space of glass
With golden candles over all.

Aholah. I am the queen of Amalek.
There was no tender touch or fleck
To spoil my body or bared feet.

My words were soft like dulcimers,
And the first sweet of grape-flowers
Made each side of my bosom sweet.
My raiment was as tender fruit
Whose rind smells sweet of spice-tree
root,
Bruised balm-blossom and budded
wheat.

Ahinoam. I am the queen Ahinoam.
Like the throat of a soft slain lamb
Was my throat, softer veined than
his :

My lips were as two grapes the sun
Lays his whole weight of heat upon
Like a mouth heavy with a kiss :
My hair's pure purple a wrought fleece,
My temples therein as a piece
Of a pomegranate's cleaving is.

Atarah. I am the queen Sidonian.
My face made faint the face of man,
And strength was bound between my
brows.

Spikenard was hidden in my ships,
Honey and wheat and myrrh in strips,
White wools that shine as color does,
Soft linen dyed upon the fold,
Split spice and cores of scented gold,
Cedar and broken calamus.

Semiramis. I am the queen Semira-
mis.
The whole world, and the sea that is
In fashion like a chrysopras,
The noise of all men laboring,
The priest's mouth tired through thanks-
giving,
The sound of love in the blood's
pause,

The strength of love in the blood's beat,
All these were cast beneath my feet,
And all found lesser than I was.

Hesione. I am the queen Hesione.
The seasons that increased in me
Made my face fairer than all men's.
I had the summer in my hair;
And all the pale gold autumn air
Was as the habit of my sense.
My body was as fire that shone :
God's beauty that makes all things one
Was one among my handmaidens.

Chrysothemis. I am the queen of
Samothece.

God, making roses, made my face
As a rose filled up full with red.
My prows made sharp the straitened
seas

From Pontus to that Chersonese
Whereon the ebbd Asian stream is
shed.

My hair was as sweet scent that drips :
Love's breath begun about my lips
Kindled the lips of people dead.

Thomyris. I am the queen of Scy-
thians.

My strength was like no strength of
man's,

My face like day, my breast like
spring.

My fame was felt in the extreme land
That hath sunshine on the one hand,
And on the other star-shining.

Yea, and the wind there fails of breath ;
Yea, and there life is waste like death ;
Yea, and there death is a glad thing.

Harhas. I am the queen of Anakim.
In the spent years whose speech is dim,

Whose raiment is the dust and death,
My stately body without stain
Shone as the shining race of rain

Whose hair a great wind scattereth.
Now hath God turned my lips to sighs,
Plucked off mine eyelids from mine eyes,
And sealed with seals my way of breath.

Myrrha. I am the queen Arabian.
The tears wherewith mine eyelids ran

Smelt like my perfumed eyelids' smell.
A harsh thirst made my soft mouth hard,
That ached with kisses afterward ;

My bram rang like a beaten bell.
As tears on eyes, as fire on wood,
Sin fed upon my breath and blood,
Sin made my breasts subside and
swell.

Pasiphae. I am the queen Pasiphae.
Not all the pure clean-colored sea
Could cleanse or cool my yearning
veins ;

Nor any root nor herb that grew,
Flag-leaves that let green water through,

Nor washing of the dew and rains.
From shame's pressed core I wrung the
sweet

Fruit's savor that was death to eat,
Whereof no seed but death remains-

Sappho. I am the queen of Lesbians.
My love, that had no part in man's,
Was sweeter than all shape of sweet.

The intolerable infinite desire
Made my face pale like faded fire
When the ashen pyre falls through
with heat.

My blood was hot wan wine of love,
And my song's sound the sound thereof,
The sound of the delight of it.

Messalina. I am the queen of Italy.
These were the signs God set on me :
A barren beauty subtle and sleek,
Curled carven hair, and cheeks worn
wan

With fierce false lips of many a man,
Large temples where the blood ran
weak,

A mouth athirst and amorous,
And hungering as the grave's mouth
does,

That, being an hungered, cannot
speak.

Amestris. I am the queen of Persians.
My breasts were lordlier than bright
swans,

My body as amber fair and thin.
Strange flesh was given my lips for
bread,

With poisonous hours my days were
fed,

And my feet shod with adder-skin.
In Shushan toward Ecbatane

I wrought my joys with tears and pain,
My loves with blood and bitter sin.

Ephrath. I am the queen of Rephaim.
God, that some while refraineth him,
Made in the end a spoil of me.

My rumor was upon the world
As strong sound of swollen water hurled
Through porches of the straining sea
My hair was like the flag-flower,
And my breasts carven goodlier
Than beryl with chalcedony.

Pasithea. I am the queen of Cypriotes.
Mine oarsmen, laboring with brown
throats,

Sang of me many a tender thing.
My maidens, girdled loose, and braced
With gold from bosom to white waist,
Praised me between their wool-comb-
ing.

All that praise Venus all night long
With lips like speech and lids like song
Praised me till song lost heart to sing.

Alaciel. I am the queen Alaciel.
My mouth was like that moist gold cell
Whereout the thickest honey drips.
Mine eyes were as a gray-green sea :
The amorous blood that smote on me
Smote to my feet and finger-tips.
My throat was whiter than the dove,
Mine eyelids as the seals of love,
And as the doors of love my lips.

Erigone. I am the queen Erigone.
The wild wine shed as blood on me
Made my face brighter than a bride's.
My large lips had the old thirst of earth,
Mine arms the might of the old sea's
girth
Bound round the whole world's iron
sides.

Within mine eyes and in mine ears
Were music and the wine of tears,
And light, and thunder of the tides.

Et hic exeant, et dicat BERSABE regina.

Alas! God, for thy great pity
And for the might that is in thee,
Behold, I woful Bersabe
Cry out with stoopings of my knee,
And thy wrath laid and bound on me
Till I may see thy love.

Behold, Lord, this child is grown
Within me between bone and bone
To make me mother of a son,
Made of my body with strong moan :
There shall not be another one
That shall be made hereof.

King David. Lord God, alas! what
shall I sain?

Lo, thou art as an hundred men
Both to break and build again :
The wild ways thou makest plain,

Thine hands hold the hail and rain,
And thy fingers both grape and grain ;
Of their largess we be all well fain,

And of their great pity :
The sun thou madest of good gold,
Of clean silver the moon cold,
All the great stars thou hast told
As thy cattle in thy fold

Every one by his name of old ;
Wind and water thou hast in hold,

Both the land and the long sea ;
Both the green sea and the land,
Lord God, thou hast in hand,
Both white water and gray sand ;
Upon thy right or thy left hand
There is no man that may stand :

Lord, thou rue on me.
O wise Lord, if thou be keen
To note things amiss that been,
I am not worth a shell of bean
More than an old mare meagre and
lean.

For all my wrong-doing with my queen,
It grew not of our heart's clean,

But it began of her body.

For it fell in the hot May,
I stood within a paven way
Built of fair bright stone, perfay,
That is as fire of night and day,

And lighteth all my house.
Therein be neither stones nor sticks,
Neither red nor white bricks,
But for cubits five or six
There is most goodly sardonyx,
And amber laid in rows.

It goes round about my roofs,
(If ye list ye shall have proofs)
There is good space for horse and hoofs
Plain and nothing perilous.

For the fair green weather's heat,
And for the smell of leav's sweet,
It is no marvel, well ye weet,

A man to waxen amorous.
This I say now by my case
That spied forth of that royal place :
There I saw in no great space
Mine own sweet, both body and face
Under the fresh boughs.

In a water that was there
She wesshe her goodly body bare,
And dried it with her owen hair :
Both her arms and her knees fair,
Both bosom and brows :

Both shoulders and eke thighs,
 Tho she wesshe upon this wise;
 Ever she sighed with little sighs,
 And ever she gave God thank.
 Yea, God wot I can well see yet
 Both her breast and her sides all wet,
 And her long hair withouten let
 Spread sideways like a drawing net;
 Full dear bought and full far fet
 Was that sweet thing there y-set;
 It were a hard thing to forget
 How both lips and eyen met,
 Breast and breath sank.

So goodly a sight as there she was,
 Lying looking on her glass
 By wan water in green grass,
 Yet saw never man.

So soft and great she was and bright
 With all her body waxen white,
 I woxe nigh blind to see the light
 Shed out of it to left and right:
 This bitter sin from that sweet sight
 Between us twain began.

Nathan. Now, sir, be merry anon,
 For ye shall have a full wise son,
 Goodly and great of flesh and bone:
 There shall no king be such an one,
 I swear by Godis rood.

Therefore, lord, be merry here,
 And go to meat withouten fear,
 And hear a mass with goddly cheer;
 For to all folk ye shall be dear,
 And all folk of your blood.

Et tunc dicant Laudamus.

ST. DOROTHY.

It hath been seen, and yet it shall be
 seen,
 That out of tender mouths God's praise
 hath been
 Made perfect, and with wood and simple
 string
 He hath played music sweet as shawm-
 playing
 To please himself with softness of all
 sound;
 And no small thing but hath been some-
 time found
 Full sweet of use, and no such humbles-
 ness

But God hath bruised withal the sen-
 tences
 And evidence of wise men witness-
 ing;

No leaf that is so soft a hidden thing
 It never shall get sight of the great sun;
 The strength of ten has been the
 strength of one,
 And lowliness has waxed imperious.

There was in Rome a man Theophi-
 lus,

Of right great blood and gracious ways,
 that had

All noble fashions to make people glad
 And a soft life of pleasurable days.

He was a goodly man for one to praise,
 Flawless and whole upward from foot
 to head;

His arms were a red hawk that alway
 fed

On a small bird with feathers gnawed
 upon,

Beaten and plucked about the bosom-
 bone

Whereby a small round fleck like fire
 there was:

They called it in their tongue lampa-
 dias:

This was the banner of the lordly man.
 In many straits of sea and reaches wan
 Full of quick wind, and many a shaken
 firth,

It had seen fighting days of either earth,
 Westward or east of waters Gaditane
 (This was the place of sea-rocks under
 Spain

Called after the great praise of Her-
 cules),

And north beyond the washing Pontic
 seas,

Far windy Russian places fabulous,
 And salt fierce tides of storm-swoln
 Bosphorus.

Now, as this lord came straying in
 Rome town,

He saw little lattice open down,
 And after it a press of maidens' heads
 That sat upon their cold small quiet
 beds

Talking, and played upon short-stringèd
 lutes;

And other some ground perfume out of
 roots

Gathered by marvellous moons in Asia,
Saffron and aloe and wild cassia,
Colored all through and smelling of
the sun;

And over all these was a certain one
Clothed softly, with sweet herbs about
her hair,

And bosom flowerful; her face more
fair

Than sudden-singing April in soft
lands;

Eyed like a gracious bird, and in both
hands

She held a psalter painted green and
red.

This Theophile laughed at the heart,
and said, —

“Now God so help me hither and St
Paul,

As by the new time of their festival
I have good will to take this maid to
wife.”

And herewith fell to fancies of her life,
And soft half-thoughts that ended sud-
denly.

This is man's guise to please himself,
when he

Shall not see one thing of his pleasant
things,

Nor with outwatch of many travailings
Come to be eased of the least pain he
hath

For all his love and all his foolish wrath,
And all the heavy manner of his mind.

Thus is he like a fisher fallen blind,
That casts his nets across the boat awry
To strike the sea, but lo! he striketh
dry,

And plucks them back all broken for
his pain,

And bites his beard, and casts across
again,

And reaching wrong slips over in the
sea.

So hath this man a strangled neck for
fee,

For all his cost he chuckles in his
throat.

This Theophile that little hereof wote
Laid wait to hear of her what she might
be:

Men told him she had name of Doro-
thy,

And was a lady of a worthy house.

Theat this knight grew inly glorious
That he should have a love so fair of
place.

She was a maiden of most quiet face,
Tender of speech, and had no hardi-
hood,

But was nigh feeble of her fearful
blood;

Her mercy in her was so marvellous
From her least years, that seeing her
schoolfellows

That read beside her stricken with a
rod,

She would cry sore, and say some word
to God

That he would ease her fellow of his
pain.

There is no touch of sun or fallen rain
That ever fell on a more gracious
thing.

In middle Rome there was in stone-
working

The church of Venus painted royally.

The chapels of it were some two or
three,

In each of them her tabernacle was,
And a wide window of six feet in glass
Colored with all her works in red and
gold.

The altars had bright cloths and cups
to hold

The wine of Venus for the services,
Made out of honey and crushed wood-
berries

That shed sweet yellow through the
thick wet red,

That on high days was borne upon the
head

Of Venus' priest, for any man to drink;
So that in drinking he should fall to
think

On some fair face, and in the thought
thereof

Worship, and such should triumph in
his love.

For this soft wine that did such grace
and good

Was new trans-shaped and mixed with
love's own blood,

That in the fighting Trojan time was
bled;

For which came such a woe to Diomed

That he was stifled after in hard sea.
And some said that this wine-shedding
should be

Made of the falling of Adonis' blood,
That curled upon the thorns and
broken wood,

And round the gold silk shoes on
Venus' feet :

The taste thereof was as hot honey
sweet,

And in the mouth ran soft and riotous.
This was the holiness of Venus' house.

It was their worship, that in August
days

Twelve maidens should go through
those Roman ways

Naked, and having gold across their
brows,

And their hair twisted in short golden
rows,

To minister to Venus in this wise ;
And twelve men chosen in their com-
panies

To match these maidens by the altar-
stair,

All in one habit, crowned upon the
hair.

Among these men was chosen The-
ophile.

This knight went out, and prayed a
little while,

Holding Queen Venus by her hands
and knees :

I will give thee twelve royal images
Cut in glad gold, with marvels of

wrought stone,
For thy sweet priests to lean and pray
upon,

Jasper and hyacinth and chrysopras,
And the strange Asian thalamite that

was
Hidden twelve ages under heavy sea

Among the little sleepy pearls, to be
A shrine lit over with soft candle-flame

Burning all night red as hot brows of
shame,

So thou wilt be my lady without sin.
Goddess that art all gold outside and

in,
Help me to serve thee in thy holy

way.
Thou knowest, Love, that in my bearing

day

There shone a laughter in the singing
stars

Round the gold-ceiled bride-bed wherein
Mars

Touched thee and had thee in your
kissing wise.

Now, therefore, sweet, kiss thou my
maiden's eyes

That they may open graciously towards
me ;

And this new fashion of thy shrine
shall be

As soft with gold as thine own happy
head.

The goddess, that was painted with
face red

Between two long green tumbled sides
of sea,

Stooped her neck sideways, and spake
pleasantly :

Thou shalt have grace as thou art
thrall of mine.

And with this came a savor of shed
wine,

And plucked-out petals from a rose's
head :

And softly with slow laughs of lip she
said, —

Thou shalt have favor all thy days of
me.

Then came Theophilus to Dorothy,
Saying : O sweet, if one should strive or

speak
Against God's ways, he gets a beaten

check
For all his wage and shame above all

men.
Therefore I have no will to turn again

When God saith "go," lest a worse
thing fall out.

Then she, misdoubting lest he went
about

To catch her wits, made answer some-
what thus :

I have no will, my lord Theophilus,
To speak against this worthy word of

yours ;
Knowing how God's will in all speech

endures,
That save by grace there may no thing

be said.
Then Theophile waxed light from foot

to head,

And softly fell upon this answering :
 It is well seen you are a chosen thing
 To do God service in his gracious way.
 I will that you make haste and holiday
 To go next year upon the Venus stair,
 Covered none else, but crowned upon
 your hair,
 And do the service that a maiden doth.
 She said: But I that am Christ's maid
 were loath
 To do this thing that hath such bitter
 name.
 Thereat his brows were beaten with
 sore shame,
 And he came off, and said no other
 word.
 Then his eyes chanced upon his banner-
 bird,
 And he fell fingering at the staff of it,
 And laughed for wrath, and stared
 between his feet,
 And out of a chafed heart he spake as
 thus:
 Lo how she japes at me Theophilus,
 Feigning herself a fool, and hard to
 love;
 Yet in good time for all she boasteth of
 She shall be like a little beaten bird.
 And while his mouth was open in that
 word,
 He came upon the house Janiculum,
 Where some went busily, and other
 some
 Talked in the gate called the gate
 glorious.
 The emperor, which was one Gabalus,
 Sat over all and drank chill wine alone.
 To whom is come Theophilus anon,
 And said as thus: *Beau sire, Dieu vous*
 aide.
 And afterward sat under him, and said
 All this thing through as ye have wholly
 heard.
 This Gabalus laughed thickly in his
 beard.
 Yea, this is righteousness and maiden
 rule.
 Truly, he said, a maid is but a fool.
 And japed at them as one full villanous,
 In a lewd wise, this heathen Gabalus,
 And sent his men to bind her as he
 bade.
 Thus have they taken Dorothy the maid,

And haled her forth as men hale pick-
 purses:
 A little need God knows they had of
 this,
 To hale her by her maiden gentle hair.
 Thus went she lowly, making a soft
 prayer,
 As one who stays the sweet wine in his
 mouth,
 Murmuring with eased lips, and is
 most loath
 To have done wholly with the sweet of
 it:
 'Christ king, fair Christ, that knowest
 all men's wit
 And all the feeble fashion of my ways,
 O perfect God, that from all yester-
 days
 Abidest whole with morrows perfected,
 I pray thee by thy mother's holy head,
 Thou help me to do right, that I not
 slip:
 I have no speech nor strength upon my
 lip,
 Except thou help me, who art wise and
 sweet.
 Do this, too, for those nails that clove
 thy feet,
 Let me die maiden after many pains.
 Though I be least among thy hand-
 maidens,
 Doubtless I shall take death more
 sweetly thus.
 Now have they brought her to King
 Gabalus,
 Who laughed in all his throat some
 breathing-whiles.
 By God, he said, if one should leap two
 miles,
 He were not pained about the sides so
 much.
 This were a soft thing for a man to
 touch.
 Shall one so chafe that hath such little
 bones?
 And shook his throat with thick and
 chuckled moans
 For laughter that she had such holi-
 ness.
 What aileth thee, wilt thou do services?
 It were good fare to fare as Venus doth.
 Then said this lady with her maiden
 mouth,

Shamefaced, and something paler in the
cheek :

Now, sir, albeit my wit and will to
speak

Give me no grace in sight of worthy men,
For all my shame yet know I this again,
I may not speak, nor after down-lying
Rise up to take delight in lute-playing,
Nor sing nor sleep, nor sit and fold my
hands,

But my soul in some measure under-
stands

God's grace laid like a garment over
me.

For this fair God that out of strong,
sharp sea

Lifted the shapely and green-colored
land,

And hath the weight of heaven in his
hand

As one might hold a bird, and under
him

The heavy golden planets beam by
beam

Building the feasting-chambers of his
house,

And the large world he holdeth with
his brows,

And with the light of them astonisheth
All place and time and face of life and
death,

And motion of the north wind and the
south,

And is the sound within his angel's
mouth

Of singing words and words of thanks-
giving,

And is the color of the latter spring
And heat upon the summer and the
sun,

And is beginning of all things begun,
And gathers in him all things to their
end,

And with the fingers of his hand doth
bend

The stretched-out sides of heaven like
a sail,

And with his breath he maketh the red
pale,

And fills with blood faint faces of men
dead,

And with the sound between his lips
are fed

Iron and fire and the white body of
snow,

And blossom of all trees in places low.
And small bright herbs about the little
hills,

And fruit pricked softly with birds'
tender bills,

And flight of foam about green fields
of sea,

And fourfold strength of the great
winds that be

Moved always outward from beneath
his feet,

And growth of grass and growth of
sheavèd wheat

And all green flower of goodly-growing
lands;

And all these things he gathers with
his hands,

And covers all their beauty with his
wings:

The same, even God that governs all
these things,

Hath set my feet to be upon his ways.
Now, therefore, for no painfulness of
days

I shall put off this service bound on
me.

Also, fair sir, ye know this certainly,
How God was in his flesh full chaste
and meek,

And gave his face to shame, and either
cheek

Gave up to smiting of men tyrannous.
And here with a great voice this
Gabalus

Cried out and said: By God's blood
and his bones,

This were good game betwixen night
and nones

For one to sit and hearken to such
saws:

I were as lief fall in some big beast's
jaws

As hear these women's jaw-teeth chat-
tering;

By God a woman is the harder thing,
One may not put a hook into her
mouth.

Now by St. Luke I am so sore adrouth
For all these saws, I must needs drink
again;

But I pray God deliver all us men

From all such noise of women and their
heat.

That is a noble scripture, well I weet,
That likens women to an empty can;
When God said that, he was a full wise
man.

I trow no man may blame him as for
that.

And herewithal he drank a draught,
and spat,

And said: Now shall I make an end
hereof.

Come near, all men, and hearken for
God's love,

And ye shall hear a jest or twain, God
wot.

And spake as thus with mouth full
thick and hot:

But thou do this, thou shalt be shortly
slain.

Lo, sir, she said, this death and all this
pain

I take in penance of my bitter sins.

Yea, now, quoth Gabalus, this game
begins.

Lo, without sin one shall not live a span.
Lo, this is she that would not look on
man

Between her fingers folded in thwart
wise.

See how her shame hath smitten in her
eyes

That was so clean, she had not heard of
shame.

Certes, he said, by Gabalus my name,
This two years back I was not so well
pleased.

This were good mirth for sick men to
be eased,

And rise up whole and laugh at hearing
of.

I pray thee, show us something of thy
love,

Since thou wast maid thy gown is
waxen wide.

Yea, maid I am, she said, and some-
what sighed,

As one who thought upon the low fair
house

Where she sat working, with soft
bended brows

Watching her threads, among the
school-maidens.

And she thought well, now God had
brought her thence,
She should not come to sew her gold
again.

Then cried King Galabus upon his
men

To have her forth, and draw her with
steel gins.

And as a man hag-ridden beats and
grins,

And bends his body sidelong in his bed,
So wagged he with his body and knave's
head,

Gaping at her, and blowing with his
breath.

And in good time he gat an evil death
Out of his lewdness with his cursèd
wives:

His bones were hewn asunder as with
knives

For his misliving, certes it is said.

But all the evil wrought upon this maid,
It were full hard for one to handle it.

For her soft blood was shed upon her
feet,

And all her body's color bruised and
faint.

But she, as one abiding God's great
saint,

Spake not nor wept for all this travail
hard.

Wherefore the king commanded after
ward

To slay her presently in all men's sight.
And it was now an hour upon the night,

And winter-time, and a few stars be-
gan.

The weather was yet feeble and all wan
For beating of a weighty wind and
snow.

And she came walking in soft wise and
slow,

And many men with faces piteous.

Then came this heavy cursing Gabalus,
That swore full hard into his drunken

beard;

And faintly after without any word
Came Theophile some paces off the

king.

And in the middle of this wayfaring
Full tenderly beholding her he said:

There is no word of comfort with
men dead,

Nor any face and color of things sweet ;
But always with lean cheeks and lifted
feet

These dead men lie all aching to the
blood

With bitter cold, their brows withouten
hood

Beating for chill, their bodies swathed
full thin :

Alas ! what hire shall any have herein
To give his life and get such bitterness ?

Also the soul going forth bodiless
Is hurt with naked cold, and no man
saith

If there be house or covering for death
To hide the soul that is discomforted.

Then she beholding him a little said :
Alas ! fair lord, ye have no wit of this ;

For on one side death is full poor of
bliss,

And, as ye say, full sharp of bone and
lean ;

But on the other side is good and green,
And hath soft flower of tender-colored
hair

Grown on his head, and a red mouth as
fair

As may be kissed with lips ; thereto his
face

Is as God's face, and in a perfect place
Full of all sun and color of straight
boughs,

And waterheads about a painted house
That hath a mile of flowers either way

Outward from it, and blossom-grass of
May

Thickening on many a side for length
of heat,

Hath God set death upon a noble seat
Covered with green and flowered in the
fold,

In likeness of a great king grown full
old

And gentle with new temperance of
blood ;

And on his brows a purpled purple hood,
They may not carry any golden thing ;

And plays some tune with subtle finger-
ing

On a small cithern, full of tears and
sleep,

And heavy pleasure that is quick to
weep,

And sorrow with the honey in her
mouth ;

And for this might of music that he
doth,

Are all souls drawn toward him with
great love,

And weep for sweetness of the noise
thereof,

And bow to him with worship of their
knees ;

And all the field is thick with companies
Of fair-clothed men that play on shawms
and lutes,

And gather honey of the yellow fruits
Between the branches waxen soft and
wide ;

And all this peace endures in either
side

Of the green land, and God beholdeth
all.

And this is girdled with a round fair
wall

Made of red stone, and cool with heavy
leaves

Grown out against it, and green blossom
cleaves

To the green chinks, and lesser wall-
weed sweet,

Kissing the crannies that are split with
heat,

And branches where the summer draws
to head.

And Theophile burnt in the cheek,
and said :

Yea, could one see it, this were marvel-
lous.

I pray you, at your coming to this house,
Give me some leaf of all those tree-
branches ;

Seeing how sharp and white our
weather is,

There is no green nor gracious red to
see.

Yea, sir, she said, that shall I cer-
tainly.

And from her long sweet throat without
a fleck

Undid the gold, and through her
stretched-out neck

The cold axe clove, and smote away
her head :

Out of her throat the tender blood full
red

Fell suddenly through all her long soft
hair.

And with good speed for hardness of
the air

Each man departed to his house again.

Lo! as fair color in the face of
men

At seed-time of their blood, or in such
wise

As a thing seen increaseth in men's
eyes,

Caught first far off by sickly fits of
sight, —

So a word said, if one shall hear aright,
Abides against the season of its growth.

This Theophile went slowly, as one
doth

That is not sure for sickness of his
feet;

And, counting the white stonework of
the street,

Tears fell out of his eyes for wrath and
love,

Making him weep more for the shame
thereof

Than for true pain: so went he half a
mile.

And women mocked him, saying:
Theophile,

Lo, she is dead; what shall a woman
have

That loveth such an one? so Christ me
save,

I were as lief to love a man new-hung.
Surely this man has bitten on his

tongue,
This makes him sad and writhled in

his face.

And when they came upon the paven
place

That was called sometime the place
amorous,

There came a child before Theophilus,
Bearing a basket, and said suddenly:

Fair sir, this is my mistress Dorothy
That sends you gifts; and with this he

was gone.
In all this earth there is not such an

one
For color and straight stature made so
fair.

The tender growing gold of his pure
hair

Was as wheat growing, and his mouth
as flame.

God called him Holy after his own
name.

With gold cloth like fire burning he
was clad.

But for the fair green basket that he
had,

It was filled up with heavy white, and
red;

Great roses stained still where the first
rose bled,

Burning at heart for shame their heart
withholds;

And the sad color of strong mari-
golds

That have the sun to kiss their lips for
love;

The flower that Venus' hair is woven of,
The color of fair apples in the sun,

Late peaches gathered when the heat
was done,

And the slain air got breath; and after
these

The fair faint-headed poppies drunk
with ease,

And heaviness of hollow lilies red.
Then cried they all that saw these

things, and said
It was God's doing, and was marvel-
lous.

And in brief while this knight The-
ophilus

Is waxen full of faith, and witnesseth
Before the king, of God and love and

death,
For which the king bade hang him

presently.

A gallows of a goodly piece of tree
This Gabalus hath made to hang him

on.
Forth of this world lo Theophile is

gone
With a wried neck — God give us better
fare

Than his that hath a twisted throat to
wear!

But truly for his love God hath him
brought

There where his heavy body grieves
him nought,

Nor all the people plucking at his feet
But in his face his lady's face is sweet.

And through his lips her kissing lips
are gone.

God send him peace, and joy of such
an one!

This is the story of St. Dorothy.
I will you of your mercy pray for me
Because I wrote these sayings for your
grace,
That I may one day see her in the face.

THE TWO DREAMS.

(FROM BOCCACCIO.)

I WILL that if I say a heavy thing
Your tongues forgive me; seeing ye
know that spring
Has flecks and fits of pain to keep her
sweet,
And walks sometime with winter-bitten
feet.

Moreover it sounds often well to let
One string, when ye play music, keep
at fret

The whole song through; one petal
that is dead

Confirms the roses, be they white or red;
Dead sorrow is not sorrowful to hear
As the thick noise that breaks mid
weeping were;

The sick sound aching in a lifted throat
Turns to sharp silver of a perfect note;
And though the rain falls often, and
with rain

Late autumn falls on the old red leaves
like pain,

I deem that God is not disquieted.
Also while men are fed with wine and
bread,

They shall be fed with sorrow at his
hand.

There grew a rose-garden in Florence
land

More fair than many; all red summers
through

The leaves smelt sweet and sharp of
rain, and blew

Sideways with tender wind; and there-
in fell

Sweet sound wherewith the green waxed
audible,

As a bird's will to sing disturbed his
throat,

And set the sharp wings forward like a
boat

Pushed through soft water, moving his
brown side

Smooth-shapen as a maid's, and shook
with pride

His deep warm bosom, till the heavy
sun's

Set face of heat stopped all the songs
at once.

The ways were clean to walk, and deli-
cate;

And when the windy white of March
grew late,

Before the trees took heart to face the
sun

With ravelled raiment of lean winter
on,

The roots were thick and hot with hol-
low grass.

Some roods away a lordly house
there was,

Cool with broad courts and latticed
passage wet

From rush-flowers and lilies ripe to
set,

Sown close among the strewings of the
floor;

And either wall of the slow corridor
Was dim with deep device of gracious
things;

Some angel's steady mouth and weight
of wings

Shut to the side; or Peter with straight
stole

And beard cut black against the aureole
That spanned his head from nape to

crown; there
Mary's gold hair, thick to the girdle-

tie
Wherein was bound a child with tender

feet;

Or the broad cross with blood nigh
brown on it.

Within this house a righteous lord
abode,

Ser Averardo; patient of his mood,
And just of judgment; and to child he

had
A maid so sweet that her mere sight
made glad

<p>Men sorrowing, and unbound the brows of hate; And where she came, the lips that pain made strait Waxed warm and wide, and from un- tender grew Tender as those that sleep brings pa- tience to. Such long locks had she, that with knee to chin She might have wrapped and warmed her feet therein. Right seldom fell her face on weeping wise; Gold hair she had, and golden-colored eyes, Filled with clear light and fire and large repose Like a fair hound's; no man there is but knows Her face was white, and thereto she was tall; In no wise lacked there any praise at all To her most perfect and pure maiden- hood; No sin I think there was in all her blood. She, where a gold grate shut the roses in, Dwelt daily through deep summer weeks, through green Flushed hours of rain upon the leaves; and there Love made him room and space to worship her With tender worship of bowed knees, and wrought Such pleasure as the pained sense pal- ates not For weariness, but at one taste undoes The heart of its strong sweet, is raven- ous Of all the hidden honey; words and sense Fail through the tune's imperious prevalence. In a poor house this lover kept apart, Long communing with patience next his heart If love of his might move that face at all, Tuned evenwise with colors musical;</p>	<p>Then after length of days he said thus: "Love, For love's own sake and for the love thereof, Let no harsh words untune your gra- cious mood; For good it were, if any thing be good, To comfort me in this pain's plague of mine; Seeing thus, how neither sleep nor bread nor wine Seems pleasant to me, yea no thing that is Seems pleasant to me; only I know this, Love's ways are sharp for palms of piteous feet To travel, but the end of such is sweet: Now do with me as seemeth you the best." She mused a little, as one holds his guest By the hand musing, with her face borne down: Then said, "Yea, though such bitter seed be sown, Have no more care of all that you have said; Since if there is no sleep will bind your head, Lo, I am fain to help you certainly: Christ knoweth, sir, if I would have you die; There is no pleasure when a man is dead." Thereat he kissed her hands and yellow head, And clipped her fair long body many times: I have no wit to shape in written rhymes A scant tithe of this great joy they had. They were too near love's secret to be glad, As whoso deems the core will surely melt From the warm fruit his lips caress, hath felt Some bitter kernel where the teeth shut hard; Or as sweet music sharpens after ward,</p>
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Being half disrelished both for sharp
and sweet ;
As sea-water, having killed over-heat
In a man's body, chills it with faint
ache ;
So their sense, burdened **only** for love's
sake,
Failed for pure love ; yet so time served
their wit,
They saved each day some gold reserves
of it,
Being wiser in love's riddle than such
be
Whom fragments feed with his chance
charity.
All things felt sweet were felt sweet
overmuch ;
The rose-thorn's prickle dangerous to
touch,
And flecks of fire in the thin leaf-
shadows ;
Too keen the breathèd honey of the
rose,
Its red too harsh a weight on feasted
eyes ;
They were so far gone in love's histo-
ries,
Beyond all shape and color and mere
breath,
Where pleasure has for kinsfolk sleep
and death,
And strength of soul and body waxen
blind
For weariness, and flesh entailed with
mind,
When the keen edge of sense foretast-
eth sin.
Even this green place the summer
caught them in
Seemed half deflowered and sick with
beaten leaves
In their strayed eyes ; these gold flower-
fumèd eyes
Burnt out to make the sun's love-offer-
ing,
The midnight's prayer, the rose's thanks-
giving,
The trees' weight burdening the
strengthless air,
The shape of her stilled eyes, her
colored hair,
Her body's balance from the moving
feet, —

All this, found fair, lacked yet one grain
of sweet
It had some warm weeks back : so
perisheth
On May's new lip the tender April
breath :
So those same walks the wind sowed
lilies in
All April through, and all their latter
kin
Of languid leaves whereon the autumn
blows, —
The dead red raiment of the last year's
rose, —
The last year's laurel, and the last year's
love,
Fade, and grow things that death grows
weary of.
What man will gather in red summer-
time
The fruit of some obscure and hoary
rhyme
Heard last midwinter, taste the heart
in it,
Mould the smooth semitones afresh, refit
The fair limbs ruined, flush the dead
blood through
With color, make all broken beauties
new
For love's new lesson — shall not such
find pain
When the marred music laboring in his
brain
Frets him with sweet sharp fragments,
and lets slip
One word that might leave satisfied his
lip, —
One touch that might put fire in all the
chords ?
This was her pain : to miss from all
sweet words
Some taste of sound, diverse and deli-
cate, —
Some speech the old love found out to
compensate
For seasons of shut lips and drowsi-
ness ;
Some grace, some word the old love
found out to bless
Passionless months and undelighted
weeks.
The flowers had lost their summer
scented cheeks,

Their lips were no more sweet than
daily breath :

The year was plagued with instances of
death.

So fell it, these were sitting in cool
grass

With leaves about, and many a bird
there was

Where the green shadow thickest im-
pleached

Soft fruit and writhen spray and blos-
som bleached

Dry in the sun or washed with rains to
white :

Her girdle was pure silk, the bosom
bright

With purple as purple water and gold
wrought in.

One branch had touched with dusk her
lips and chin,

Made violet of the throat, abashed with
shade

The breast's bright plaited work : but
nothing frayed

The sun's large kiss on the luxurious
hair.

Her beauty was new color to the
air,

And music to the silent many birds.

Love was an-hungered for some perfect
words

To praise her with; but only her low
name

"Andrevuola" came thrice, and thrice
put shame

In her clear cheek, so fruitful with new
red

That for pure love straightway shame's
self was dead.

Then with lids gathered as who late
had wept,

She began saying, "I have so little
slept,

My lids drowse now against the very
sun;

Yea, the brain aching with a dream
begun

Beats like a fitful blood; kiss but both
brows,

And you shall pluck my thoughts grown
dangerous

Almost away." He said thus, kissing
them :

"O sole sweet thing that God is glad
to name,

My one gold gift, if dreams be sharp
and sore

Shall not the waking time increase
much more

With taste and sound, sweet eyesight
or sweet scent?

Has any heat too hard and insolent
Burnt bare the tender married leaves,

undone

The maiden grass shut under from the
sun?

Where in this world is room enough
for pain?"

The feverish finger of love had
touched again

Her lips with happier blood; the pain
lay meek

In her fair face, nor altered lip nor
cheek

With pallor or with pulse; but in her
mouth

Love thirsted as a man wayfaring doth,
Making it humble as weak hunger is.

She lay close to him, bade do this and
this,

Say that, sing thus : then almost weep-
ing-ripe

Crouched, then laughed low. As one
that fain would wipe

The old record out of old things done
and dead,

She rose, she heaved her hands up, and
waxed red

For wilful heart and blameless fear of
blame;

Saying, "Though my wits be weak, this
is no shame

For a poor maid whom love so punish-
eth

With heats of hesitation and stopped
breath

That with my dreams I live yet heavily
For pure sad heart and faith's humility.

Now be not wroth, and I will show you
this.

"Methought our lips upon their
second kiss

Met in this place, and a fair day we
had,

And fair soft leaves that waxed and
were not sad

With shaken rain, or bitten through with
 drouth;
 When I, beholding ever how your
 mouth
 Waited for mine, the throat being fallen
 back,
 Saw crawl thereout a live thing flaked
 with black
 Specks of brute slime and leper-colored
 scale,
 A devil's hide with foul flame-writhen
 grail
 Fashioned where hell's heat festers
 loathsomest;
 And that brief speech may ease me of
 the rest,
 Thus were you slain and eaten of the
 thing.
 My waked eyes felt the new day shud-
 dering
 On their low lids, felt the whole east so
 beat,
 Pant with close pulse of such a plague-
 struck heat,
 As if the palpitating dawn drew breath
 For horror, breathing between life and
 death,
 Till the sun sprang blood-bright and
 violent."
 So finishing, her soft strength wholly
 spent,
 She gazed each way, lest some brute-
 hooved thing,
 The timeless travail of hell's child-bear-
 ing,
 Should threat upon the sudden: where-
 at he,
 For relish of her tasted misery
 And tender little thornprick of her
 pain,
 Laughed with mere love. What lover
 among men
 But hath his sense fed sovereignly 'twixt
 whiles
 With tears and covered eyelids and sick
 smiles
 And soft disaster of a pained face?
 What pain established in so sweet a
 place,
 But the plucked leaf of it smells fra-
 grantly?
 What color burning man's wide-open
 eye

But may be pleurably seen? what
 sense
 Keeps in its hot sharp extreme vio-
 lence
 No savor of sweet things? The be-
 reaved blood
 And emptied flesh in their most broken
 mood
 Fail not so wholly, famish not when
 thus
 Past honey keeps the starved lip covet-
 ous.
 Therefore this speech from a glad mouth
 began,
 Breathed in her tender hair and temples
 wan
 Like one prolonged kiss while the lips
 had breath:
 "Sleep, that abides in vassalage of
 death
 And in death's service wears out half
 his age,
 Hath his dreams full of deadly vassal-
 age,
 Shadow and sound of things ungra-
 cious;
 Fair shallow faces, hooded bloodless
 brows,
 And mouths past kissing; yea, myself
 have had
 As harsh a dream as holds your eyelids
 sad.
 "This dream I tell you came three
 nights ago:
 In full mid sleep I took a whim to know
 How sweet things might be; so I turned
 and thought;
 But save my dream all sweet availed me
 not.
 First came a smell of pounded spice
 and scent
 Such as God ripens in some continent
 Of utmost amber in the Syrian sea;
 And breaths as though some costly rose
 could be
 Spoiled slowly, wasted by some bitter
 fire
 To burn the sweet out leaf by leaf, and
 tire
 The flower's poor heart with heat and
 waste, to make
 Strong magic for some perfumed wo-
 man's sake.

<p>Then a cool naked sense beneath my feet Of bud and blossom; and sound of veins that beat As if a lute should play of its own heart And fearfully, not smitten of either part; And all my blood it filled with sharp and sweet As gold swoln grain fills out the husked wheat; So I rose naked from the bed, and stood Counting the mobile measure in my blood Some pleasant while, and and through each limb there came Swift little pleasures pungent as a flame, Felt in the thrilling flesh and veins as much As the outer curls that feel the comb's first touch Thrill to the roots and shiver as from fire; And blind between my dream and my desire I seemed to stand, and held my spirit still Lest this should cease. A child whose fingers spill Honey from cells forgotten of the bee Is less afraid to stir the hive and see Some wasp's bright back inside, than I to feel Some finger-touch disturb the flesh like steel. I prayed thus: Let me catch a secret here So sweet, it sharpens the sweet taste of fear, And takes the mouth with edge of wine; I would Have here some color and smooth shape as good As those in heaven whom the chief gar- den hides With low grape-blossom veiling their white sides, And lesser tendrils that so bind and blind Their eyes and feet, that if one come behind</p>	<p>To touch their hair they see not, neither fly; This would I see in heaven, and not die. So praying, I had nigh cried out and knel't, So wholly my prayer filled me: till I felt In the dumb night's warm weight of glowing gloom Somewhat that altered all my sleeping- room, And made it like a green low place wherein Maids mix to bathe: one sets her small warm chin Against a ripple, that the angry pearl May flow like flame about her: the next curl Dips in some eddy colored of the sun To wash the dust well out: another one Holds a straight ankle in her hand and swings With lavish body sidelong, so that rings Of sweet fierce water, swollen and splen- did, fail All round her fine and floated body pale, Swayed flower-fashion, and her balanced side Swerved edgeways lets the weight of water slide, As taken in some underflow of sea Swerves the banked gold of sea-flowers; but she Pulls down some branch to keep her perfect head Clear of the river: even from wall to bed, I tell you, was my room transfigured so. Sweet, green and warm it was, nor could one know If there were walls or leaves, or if there was No bed's green curtain, but mere gentle grass. There were set also hard against the feet Gold plates with honey and green grapes to eat, With the cool water's noise to hear in rhymes: And a wind warmed me full of furze and limes</p>
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And all hot sweets the heavy summer
fills
To the round brim of smooth cup-
shapen hills.
Next the grave walking of a woman's
feet
Made my veins hesitate, and gracious
heat
Made thick the lids and leaden on mine
eyes:
And I thought ever, surely it were wise
Not yet to see her: this may last (who
knows?)
Five minutes; the poor rose is twice a
rose
Because it turns a face to her, the wind
Sings that way; hath this woman ever
sinned,
I wonder? as a boy with apple-rind,
I played with pleasures, made them to
my mind,
Changed each ere tasting. When she
came indeed,
First her hair touched me, then I grew
to feed
On the sense of her hand; her mouth
at last
Touched me between the cheek and lip,
and past
Over my face with kisses here and
there
Sown in and out across the eyes and
hair.
Still I said nothing; till she set her
face
More close and harder on the kissing-
place,
And her mouth caught like a snake's
mouth, and stung
So faint and tenderly, the fang scarce
clung
More than a bird's foot: yet a wound
it grew,
A great one, let this red mark witness
you
Under the left breast; and the stroke
thereof
So clove my sense that I woke out of
love,
And knew not what this dream was, nor
had wit;
But now God knows if I have skill of
it."

Hereat she laid one palm against her
lips
To stop their trembling; as when water
slips
Out of a beak-mouthed vessel with
faint noise,
And chuckles in the narrowed throat,
and cloys
The carven rims with murmuring, so
came
Words in her lips with no word right of
them,
A beaten speech thick and disconsolate,
Till his smile ceasing waxed compas-
sionate
Of her sore fear that grew from any
thing,—
The sound of the strong summer thick-
ening
In heated leaves of the smooth apple-
trees:
The day's breath felt about the ash-
branches,
And noises of the noon whose weight
still grew
On the hot heavy-headed flowers, and
drew
Their red mouths open till the rose-
heart ached;
For eastward all the crowding rose was
slaked
And soothed with shade: but westward
all its growth
Seemed to breathe hard with heat as a
man doth
Who feels his temples newly feverous.
And even with such motion in her
brows
As that man hath in whom sick days
begin,
She turned her throat and spake, her
voice being thin
As a sick man's, sudden and tremulous;
"Sweet, if this end be come indeed on us,
Let us love more;" and held his mouth
with hers.
As the first sound of flooded hill-waters
Is heard by people of the meadow-grass,
Or ever a wandering waif of ruin pass
With whirling stones and foam of the
brown stream
Flaked with fierce yellow: so behold
ing him

She felt before tears came her eyelids
 wet,
 Saw the face deadly thin where life was
 yet,
 Heard his throat's harsh last moan
 before it clomb:
 And he, with close mouth passionate
 and dumb,
 Burned at her lips: so lay they without
 speech,
 Each grasping other, and the eyes of
 each
 Fed in the other's face: till suddenly
 He cried out with a little broken cry
 This word, "O help me, sweet, I am
 but dead!"
 And even so saying, the color of fair
 red
 Was gone out of his face, and his
 blood's beat
 Fell, and stark death made sharp his
 upward feet
 And pointed hands; and without moan
 he died.
 Pain smote her sudden in the brows
 and side,
 Strained her lips open, and made burn
 her eyes:
 For the pure sharpness of her miseries
 She had no heart's pain, but mere
 body's wrack.
 But at the last her beaten blood drew
 back
 Slowly upon her face, and her stunned
 brows
 Suddenly grown aware and piteous
 Gathered themselves, her eyes shone,
 her hard breath
 Came as though one nigh dead came
 back from death;
 Her lips throbbed, and life trembled
 through her hair.
 And in brief while she thought to
 bury there
 The dead man, that her love might lie
 with him
 In a sweet bed under the rose-roots
 dim
 And soft earth round the branchèd
 apple-trees,
 Full of hushed heat and heavy with
 great ease,
 And no man entering divide him thence.

Wherefore she bade one of her hand-
 maidens
 To be her help to do upon this wise.
 And saying so the tears out of her
 eyes
 Fell without noise, and comforted her
 heart:
 Yea, her great pain eased of the sorest
 part
 Began to soften in her sense of it.
 There under all the little branches sweet
 The place was shapen of his burial:
 They shed thereon no thing funereal,
 But colored leaves of latter rose-blos-
 som,
 Stems of soft grass, some withered red
 and some
 Fair and flesh-blooded; and spoil splen-
 dider
 Of marigold and great spent sunflower.
 And afterwards she came back with-
 out word
 To her own house; two days went, and
 the third
 Went, and she showed her father of
 this thing.
 And for great grief of her soul's travail-
 ing
 He gave consent she should endure in
 peace
 Till her life's end; yea, till her time
 should cease,
 She should abide in fellowship of pain
 And having lived a holy year or twain
 She died of pure waste heart and wear-
 iness.
 And for love's honor in her love's dis-
 tress
 This word was written over her tomb's
 head:
 "Here dead she lieth, for whose sake
 Love is dead."

AHOLIBAIL.

In the beginning God made thee
 A woman well to look upon,
 Thy tender body as a tree
 Whereon cool wind hath always
 blown
 Till the clean branches be well
 grown.

There was none like thee in the land;
 The girls that were thy bondwomen
 Did bind thee with a purple band
 Upon thy forehead, that all men
 Should know thee for God's hand-
 maiden.

Strange raiment clad thee like a bride,
 With silk to wear on hands and
 feet,
 And plates of gold on either side :
 Wine made thee glad, and thou
 didst eat
 Honey, and choice of pleasant
 meat.

And fishers in the middle sea
 Did get thee sea-fish and sea-weeds
 In color like the robes on thee ;
 And curious work of plated reeds,
 And wools wherein live purple
 bleeds.

And round the edges of thy cup
 Men wrought thee marvels out of
 gold,
 Strong snakes with lean throats lifted
 up,
 Large eyes whereon the brows had
 hold,
 And scaly things their slime kept
 cold.

For thee they blew soft winds in flutes,
 And ground sweet roots for cunning
 scent ;
 Made slow because of many lutes,
 The wind among thy chambers
 went
 Wherein no light was violent.

God called thy name Aholibah,
 His tabernacle being in thee,
 A witness through waste Asia ;
 Thou wert a tent sewn cunningly
 With gold and colors of the sea.

God gave thee gracious ministers
 And all their work who plait and
 weave :

The cunning of embroiderers
 That sew the pillow to the sleeve,
 And likeness of all things that live.

Thy garments upon thee were fair
 With scarlet and with yellow
 thread ;
 Also the weaving of thine hair
 Was as fine gold upon thy head,
 And thy silk shoes were sewn with
 red.

All sweet things he bade sift, and
 ground
 As a man grindeth wheat in mills
 With strong wheels alway going round ;
 He gave thee corn, and grass that
 fills
 The cattle on a thousand hills.

The wine of many seasons fed
 Thy mouth, and made it fair and
 clean ;
 Sweet oil was poured out on thy head,
 And ran down like cool rain be-
 tween
 The strait close locks it melted in.

The strong men and the captains knew
 Thy chambers wrought and fash-
 ioned
 With gold and covering of blue,
 And the blue raiment of thine head
 Who sate on a stately bed.

All these had on their garments wrought
 The shape of beasts and creeping
 things.
 The body that availeth not,
 Flat backs of worms and veined
 wings,
 And the lewd bulk that sleeps and
 stings.

Also the chosen of the years,
 The multitude being at ease,
 With sackbuts and with dulcimers
 And noise of shawms and psalteries,
 Made mirth within the ears of these.

But as a common woman doth,
 Thou didst think evil and devise ;
 The sweet smell of thy breast and
 mouth,
 Thou madest as the harlot's wise,
 And there was painting on thine
 eyes.

Yea, in the woven guest-chamber
 And by the painted passages
 Where the strange, gracious paintings
 were,
 State upon state of companies,
 There came on thee the lust of
 these.

Because of shapes on either wall
 Sea-colored from some rare blue
 shell
 At many a Tyrian interval,
 Horsemen on horses, girdled well,
 Delicate and desirable, —

Thou saidest : I am sick of love :
 Stay with me flagons, comfort me
 With apples, for my pain thereof,
 Till my hands gather in his tree
 That fruit wherein my lips would
 be.

Yea, saidest thou, I will go up
 When there is no more shade than
 one

May cover with a hollow cup,
 And make my bed against the sun
 Till my blood's violence be done.

Thy mouth was leant upon the wall
 Against the painted mouth, thy chin
 Touched the hair's painted curve and
 fall ;
 Thy deep throat, fallen lax and
 thin,
 Worked as the blood's beat worked
 therein.

Therefore, O thou Aholibah,
 God is not glad because of thee ;
 And thy fine gold shall pass away
 Like those fair coins of ore that be
 Washed over by the middle sea.

Then will one make thy body bare
 To strip it of all gracious things,
 And pluck the cover from thine hair,
 And break the gift of many kings,
 Thy wrist-rings and thine ankle-
 rings.

Likewise the man whose body joins
 To thy smooth body, as was said,
 Who hath a girdle on his loins,
 And dyed attire upon his head, —
 The same who, seeing, worshipped,

Because thy face was like the face
 Of a clean maiden that smells
 sweet,

Because thy gait was as the pace
 Of one that opens not her feet,
 And is not heard within the street :

Even he, O thou Aholibah,
 Made separate from thy desire,
 Shall cut thy nose and ears away,
 And bruise thee for thy body's hire,
 And burn the residue with fire.

Then shall the heathen people say,
 The multitude being at ease ;
 Lo, this is that Aholibah
 Whose name was blown among
 strange seas,
 Grown old with soft adulteries.

Also her bed was made of green,
 Her windows beautiful for glass,
 That she had made her bed between :
 Yea, for pure lust her body was
 Made like white summer-colored
 grass.

Her raiment was a strong man's spoil ;
 Upon a table by a bed
 She set mine incense and mine oil
 To be the beauty of her head,
 In chambers walled about with red.

Also between the walls she had
 Fair faces of strong men portrayed ;
 All girdled round the loins, and clad
 With several cloths of woven braid
 And garments marvellously made.

Therefore the wrath of God shall be
 Set as a watch upon her way ;
 And whoso findeth by the sea
 Blown dust of bones will hardly say
 If this were that Aholibah.

MADONNA MIA.

UNDER green apple-boughs
That never a storm will rouse,
My lady hath her house
Between two bowers;
In either of the twain,
Red roses full of rain;
She hath for bondwomen
All kind of flowers.

She hath no handmaid fair
To draw her curled gold hair
Through rings of gold that bear
Her whole hair's weight;
She hath no maids to stand
Gold-clothed on either hand:
In all the great green land
None is so great.

She hath no more to wear
But one white hood of vair
Drawn over eyes and hair,
Wrought with strange gold,
Made for some great queen's head,
Some fair great queen since dead;
And one strait gown of red
Against the cold.

Beneath her eyelids deep
Love lying seems asleep,
Love, swift to wake, to weep,
To laugh, to gaze;
Her breasts are like white birds,
And all her gracious words
As water-grass to herds
In the June-days.

To her all dews that fall
And rains are musical;
Her flowers are fed from all,
Her joy from these;
In the deep-feathered firs
Their gift of joy is hers,
In the least breath that stirs
Across the trees.

She grows with greenest leaves,
Ripens with reddest sheaves,
Forgets, remembers, grieves,
And is not sad;

The quiet lands and skies
Leave light upon her eyes:
None knows her, weak or wise,
Or tired or glad.

None knows, none understands,
What flowers are like her hands;
Though you should search all lands
Wherein time grows,
What snows are like her feet,
Though his eyes burn with heat
Through gazing on my sweet,
Yet no man knows.

Only this thing is said:
That white and gold and red,
God's three chief words, man's bread
And oil and wine,
Were given her for dowers,
And kingdom of all hours,
And grace of goodly flowers
And various vine.

This is my lady's praise:
God after many days
Wrought her in unknown ways,
In sunset lands.
This was my lady's birth:
God gave her might and mirth,
And laid his whole sweet earth
Between her hands.

Under deep apple-boughs
My lady hath her house;
She wears upon her brows
The flower thereof;
All saying but what God saith
To her is as vain breath;
She is more strong than death,
Being strong as love.

THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

WE were ten maidens in the green corn,
Small red leaves in the mill-water:
Fairer maidens never were born,
Apples of gold for the king's daughter.

We were ten maidens by a well-head,
 Small white birds in the mill-water :
 Sweeter maidens never were wed,
 Rings of red for the king's daughter.

The first to spin, the second to sing,
 Seeds of wheat in the mill-water ;
 The third may was a goodly thing,
 White bread and brown for the king's daughter.

The fourth to sew, and the fifth to play,
 Fair green weed in the mill-water ;
 The sixth may was a goodly may,
 White wine and red for the king's daughter.

The seventh to woo, the eighth to wed,
 Fair thin reeds in the mill-water ;
 The ninth had gold work on her head,
 Honey in the comb for the king's daughter.

The ninth had gold work round her hair,
 Fallen flowers in the mill-water ;
 The tenth may was goodly and fair,
 Golden gloves for the king's daughter.

We were ten maidens in a field green,
 Fallen fruit in the mill-water :
 Fairer maidens never have been,
 Golden sleeves for the king's daughter.

By there comes the king's young son,
 A little wind in the mill-water ;
 "Out of ten maidens ye'll grant me one,"
 A crown of red for the king's daughter.

"Out of ten may's ye'll give me the best,"
 A little rain in the mill-water ;
 A bed of yellow straw for all the rest,
 A bed of gold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en out the goodliest,
 Rain that rains in the mill-water ;
 A comb of yellow shell for all the rest,
 A comb of gold for the king's daughter.

He's made her bed to the goodliest,
 Wind and hail in the mill-water ;
 A grass girdle for all the rest,
 A girdle of arms for the king's daughter.

He's set his heart to the goodliest,
 Snow that snows in the mill-water ;
 Nine little kisses for all the rest,
 An hundredfold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en his leave at the goodliest,
 Broken boats in the mill-water ;
 Golden gifts for all the rest,
 Sorrow of heart for the king's daughter.

"Ye'll make a grave for my fair body,"
 Running rain in the mill-water ;
 "And ye'll streek my brother at the side of me,"
 The pains of hell for the king's daughter.

MAY JANET.

(BRETON.)

"STAND up, stand up, thou May Janet,
 And go to the wars with me."
 He's drawn her by both hands,
 With her face against the sea.

"He that strews red shall gather white,
 He that sows white reap red,
 Before your face and my daughter's
 Meet in a marriage-bed.

"Gold coin shall grow in the yellow field,
 Green corn in the green sea-water,
 And red fruit grow of the rose's red,
 Ere your fruit grow in her."

"But I shall have her by land," he said,
 "Or I shall have her by sea,
 Or I shall have her by strong treason
 And no grace go with me."

Her father's drawn her by both hands,
He's rent her gown from her,
He's ta'en the smock round her body,
Cast in the sea-water.

The captain's drawn her by both sides
Out of the fair green sea:
"Stand up, stand up, thou May Janet,
And come to the war with me."

The first town they came to,
There was a blue bride-chamber;
He clothed her on with silk,
And belted her with amber.

The second town they came to,
The bridesmen feasted knee to knee;
He clothed her on with silver,
A stately thing to see.

The third town they came to,
The bridesmaids all had gowns of
gold;
He clothed her on with purple,
A rich thing to behold.

The last town they came to,
He clothed her white and red,
With a green flag either side of her
And a gold flag overhead.

THE BLOODY SON.

(FINNISH.)

"O WHERE have ye been the morn sae
late,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
O where have ye been the morn sae late?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"By the water-gate, by the water-gate,
O dear mither."

"And whatten kin' o' wark had ye there
to make,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And whatten kin' o' wark had ye there
to make?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"I watered my steeds with water frae
the lake,
O dear mither."

"Why is your coat sae fouled the day,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
Why is your coat sae fouled the day?
And I wot I hae but anither."

"The steeds wer stamping sair by the
weary banks of clay,
O dear mither."

"And where gat ye thae sleeves of
red,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And where gat ye thae sleeves of red?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"I have slain my ae brither by the
weary water-head,
O dear mither."

"And where will ye gang to mak your
mend,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And where will ye gang to mak your
mend?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"The warldis way, to the warldis end,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your father
dear,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your father
dear?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"The wood to fell and the logs to bear,
For he'll never see my body mair,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your mither
dear,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your mither
dear?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"The wool to card and the wool to
wear,
For ye'll never see my body mair,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave for your wife
to take,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave for your wife to
take?
And I wot I hae not anither."

"A goodly gown and a fair new make,
For she'll do nae mair for my body's
sake,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your young
son fair,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your young son
fair?"

And I wot ye hae not anither."
"A twiggen school-rod for his body to
bear,
Though it garred him greet he'll get
nae mair,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your little
daughter sweet,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your little daugh-
ter sweet?"

And I wot ye hae not anither."
"Wild mulberries for her mouth to
eat,
She'll get nae mair though it garred her
greet,
O dear mither."

"And when will ye come back frae
roamin',
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And when will ye come back frae
roamin'?"

And I wot I hae not anither."
"When the sunrise out of the north is
comen,
O dear mither."

"When shall the sunrise on the north
side be,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
When shall the sunrise on the north
side be?"

And I wot I hae not anither."
"When chuckie-stanes shall swim in
the sea,
O dear mither."

"When shall stanes in the sea swim,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
When shall stanes in the sea swim?
And I wot I hae not anither."

"When birdies' feathers are as lead
therein,
O dear mither."

"When shall feathers be as lead,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
When shall feathers be as lead?
And I wot I hae not anither."

"When God shall judge between the
quick and dead,
O dear mither."

THE SEA-SWALLOWS

THIS fell when Christmas lights were
done,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine;
But before the Easter lights begun;
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne.

Two lovers sat where the rowan blows,
And all the grass is heavy and
fine,
By the gathering place of the sea-swal-
lows
When the wind brings them over
Tyne.

Blossom of broom will never make
bread,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine;
Between her brows she is grown red,
That was full white in the fields by
Tyne.

"O what is this thing ye have on,
Show me now, sweet daughter of
mine?"

"O father, this is my little son
That I found hid in the sides of
Tyne.

"O what will ye give my son to eat,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine?"

"Fen-water and adder's meat,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."

"Or what will ye get my son to wear,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine?"

"A weed and a web of nettle's hair,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."

"Or what will ye take to line his bed,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine?"

"Two black stones at the kirk-wall's
head,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."

"Or what will ye give my son for land,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine?"

"Three girl's paces of red sand,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."

"Or what will ye give me for my son,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine?"

"Six times to kiss his young mouth
on,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."

"But what have ye done with the bear-
ing-bread,
And what have ye made of the wash-
ing-wine?
Or where have ye made your bearing-
bed,
To bear a son in the sides of Tyne?"

"The bearing-bread is soft and new,
There is no soil in the straining wine;
The bed was made between green and
blue,
It stands full soft by the sides of
Tyne."

"The fair grass was my bearing-bread,
The well-water my washing-wine;
The low leaves were my bearing-bed,
And that was best in the sides of
Tyne."

"O daughter, if ye have done this thing,
I wot the greater grief is mine;

This was a bitter child-bearing,
When ye were got by the sides of
Tyne.

"About the time of sea-swallows
That fly full thick by six and nine,
Ye'll have my body out of the house,
To bury me by the sides of Tyne."

"Set nine stones by the wall for twain,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine;
For the bed I take will measure ten,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."

"Tread twelve girl's paces out for
three,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine;
For the pit I made has taken me,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."

THE YEAR OF LOVE.

THERE were four loves that one by one,
Following the seasons and the sun,
Passed over without tears, and fell
Away without farewell.

The first was made of gold and tears,
The next of aspen-leaves and fears,
The third of rose-boughs and rose-roots,
The last love of strange fruits.

These were the four loves faded. Hold
Some minutes fast the time of gold
When our lips each way clung and
clove
To a face full of love.

The tears inside our eyelids met,
Wrung forth with kissing, and wept wet
The faces cleaving each to each
Where the blood served for speech.

The second, with low patient brows
Bound under aspen-colored boughs
And eyes made strong and grave with
sleep
And yet too weak to weep;

The third, with eager mouth at ease
Fed from late autumn honey, lees
Of scarce gold left in latter cells
With scattered flower-smells, —

Hair sprinkled over with spoilt sweet
Of ruined roses, wrists and feet
Slight-swathed, as grassy girdled
sheaves
Hold in stray poppy-leaves;

The fourth, with lips whereon has bled
Some great pale fruit's slow color, shed
From the rank bitter husk whence drips
Faint blood between her lips, —

Made of the heat of whole great Junes
Burning the blue dark round their moons
(Each like a mown red marigold),
So hard the flame keeps hold, —

These are burnt thoroughly away.
Only the first holds out a day
Beyond these latter loves that were
Made of mere heat and air.

And now the time is winterly
The first love fades too: none will see,
When April warms the world anew,
The place wherein love grew.

THE LAST ORACLE.

(A. D. 361.)

εἶπαι τῷ βασιλεῖ, χαμαὶ πέσε δαίδαλος αὐλά·
οὐκετι Φοῖβος ἔχει καλυβαν, οὐ μάντιδα δάφνην,
οὐ πᾶν λαλεῖουσιν· ἀπέσβητο καὶ λάλον ὕδωρ.

YEARS have risen and fallen in dark-
ness or in twilight,

As waxed and waned that knew not
thee nor thine,

White the world sought light by night
and sought not thy light,

Since the sad last pilgrim left thy
dark mid shrine.

Da. & the shrine, and dumb the fount of
song thence welling,

So for words more sad than tears
of blood, that said:

Tell the king, on earth has fallen the
glorious dwelling,

And the water-springs that spake are
quenched and dead.

Not a cell is left the god, no roof, no
cover;

In his hand the prophet laurel flowers
no more.

And the great king's high sad heart,
thy true last lover,

Felt thine answer pierce and cleave it
to the core.

And he bowed down his hopeless
head

In the drift of the wild world's
tide,

And dying, *Thou hast conquered*, he
said,

Galilean: he said it, and died.

And the world that was thine and
was ours

When the Graces took hands with
the Hours

Grew cold as a winter wave

In the wind from a wide-mouthed
grave,

As a gulf wide open to swallow

The light that the world held dear.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

Age on age thy mouth was mute, thy
face was hidden,

And the lips and eyes that loved thee
blind and dumb;

Song forsook their tongues that held
thy name forbidden,

Light their eyes that saw the strange
god's kingdom come.

Fire for light and hell for heaven and
psalms for pæans

Filled the clearest eyes and lips most
sweet of song,

When for chant of Greeks the wail of
Galilæans

Made the whole world moan with
hymns of wrath and wrong.

Yea, not yet we see thee, father, as they
saw thee,

They that worshipped when the world
was theirs and thine,

They whose words had power by thine
own power to draw thee

Down from heaven till earth seemed
more than heaven divine.

For the shades are about us that
 hover
 When darkness is half withdrawn,
 And the skirts of the dead night
 cover
 The face of the live new dawn.
 For the past is not utterly past,
 Though the word on its lips be the
 last,
 And the time be gone by with its
 creed
 When men were as beasts that bleed,
 As sheep or as swine that wallow,
 In the shambles of faith and of
 fear.
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
 Destroyer and healer, hear!

Yet it may be, lord and father, could
 we know it,
 We that love thee for our darkness
 shall have light
 More than ever prophet hailed of old,
 or poet
 Standing crowned and robed and
 sovereign in thy sight.
 To the likeness of one God their dreams
 enthralled thee,
 Who wast greater than all gods that
 waned and grew;
 Son of God the shining son of Time
 they called thee,
 Who wast older, O our father, than
 they knew.
 For no thought of man made gods to
 love or honor
 Ere the song within the silent soul
 began;
 Nor might earth in dream or deed take
 heaven upon her
 Till the word was clothed with speech
 by lips of man.
 And the word and the life wast thou,
 The spirit of man and the breath;
 And before thee the gods that bow
 Take life at thine hands and death.
 For these are as ghosts that wane,
 That are gone in an age or twain;
 Harsh, merciful, passionate, pure,
 They perish, but thou shalt endure;
 Be their life as the swan's or the
 swallow,
 They pass as the flight of a year.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
 Destroyer and healer, hear!
 Thou the word, the light, the life, the
 breath, the glory,
 Strong to help and heal, to lighten
 and to slay,
 Thine is all the song of man, the world's
 whole story;
 Not of morning and of evening is thy
 day.
 Old and younger gods are buried or
 begotten
 From uprising to downsetting of thy
 sun,
 Risen from eastward, fallen to westward
 and forgotten,
 And their springs are many, but their
 end is one.
 Divers births of godheads find one
 death appointed,
 As the soul whence each was born
 makes room for each;
 God by god goes out, discrowned and
 disanointed,
 But the soul stands fast that gave
 them shape and speech.
 Is the sun yet cast out of heaven?
 Is the song yet cast out of man?
 Life that had song for its leaven
 To quicken the blood that ran
 Through the veins of the songless
 years
 More bitter and cold than tears;
 Heaven that had thee for its one
 Light, life, word, witness, O sun, —
 Are they soundless and sightless and
 hollow,
 Without eye, without speech, with-
 out ear?
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
 Destroyer and healer, hear!
 Time arose, and smote thee silent at
 his warning;
 Change and darkness fell on men that
 fell from thee;
 Dark thou satest, veiled with light, be-
 hind the morning,
 Till the soul of man should lift up
 eyes and see.
 Till the blind mute soul get speech
 again and eyesight,

Man may worship not the light of life
 within;
 In his sight the stars whose fires grow
 dark in thy sight
 Shine as sunbeams on the night of
 death and sin.
 Time again is risen with mightier word
 of warning,
 Change hath blown again a blast of
 louder breath;
 Clothed with clouds and stars and
 dreams that melt in morning,
 Lo, the gods that ruled by grace of
 sin and death!
 They are conquered, they break, they
 are stricken,
 Whose might made the whole world
 pale;
 They are dust that shall rise not or
 quicken
 Though the world for their death's
 sake wail.
 As a hound on a wild beast's trace,
 So time has their godhead in chase;
 As wolves when the hunt makes
 head,
 They are scattered, they fly, they are
 fled;
 They are fled beyond hail, beyond
 hollo,
 And the cry of the chase, and the
 cheer.
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
 Destroyer and healer, hear!
 Day by day thy shadow shines in heaven
 beholden,
 Even the sun, the shining shadow of
 thy face:
 King, the ways of heaven before thy
 feet grow golden;
 God, the soul of earth is kindled
 with thy grace.
 In thy lips the speech of man whence
 gods were fashioned,
 In thy soul the thought that makes
 them and unmakes;
 By thy light and heat incarnate and im-
 passioned,
 Soul to soul of man gives light for
 light, and takes.
 As they knew thy name of old time
 could we know it,

Healer called of sickness, slayer in-
 voked of wrong,
 Light of eyes that saw thy light, god,
 king, priest, poet,
 Song should bring thee back to heal
 us with thy song.
 For thy kingdom is past not away,
 Nor thy power from the place there-
 of hurled:
 Out of heaven they shall cast not the
 day,
 They shall cast not out song from
 the world.
 By the song and the light they give,
 We know thy works that they live;
 With the gift thou hast given us of
 speech
 We praise, we adore, we beseech,
 We arise at thy bidding, and follow,
 We cry to thee, answer, appear,
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
 Destroyer and healer, hear!

IN THE BAY.

I.

BEYOND the hollow sunset, ere a star
 Take heart in heaven from eastward,
 while the west,
 Fulfilled of watery resonance and rest.
 Is as a port with clouds for harbor-
 bar
 To fold the fleet in of the winds from
 far
 That stir no plume now of the bland
 sea's breast;

II.

Above the soft sweep of the breathless
 bay
 South-westward, far past flight of night
 and day,
 Lower than the sunken sunset sinks,
 and higher
 Than dawn can freak the front of heaven
 with fire, —
 My thought with eyes and wings made
 wide makes way
 To find the place of souls that I de-
 sire.

III.

If any place for any soul there be,
 Disrobed and disentranced; if the
 might,
 The fire and force that filled with ar-
 dent light
 The souls whose shadow is half the
 light we see,
 Survive, and be suppressed not of the
 night, —
 This hour should show what all day
 hid from me.

IV.

Night knows not, neither is it shown to
 day,
 By sunlight nor by starlight is it shown,
 Nor to the full moon's eye nor footfall
 known,
 Their world's untrodden and unkindled
 way;
 Nor is the breath nor music of it blown
 With sounds of winter or with winds
 of May.

V.

But here, where light and darkness
 reconciled
 Hold earth between them as a weanling
 child
 Between the balanced hands of death
 and birth,
 Even as they held the new-born shape
 of earth
 When first life trembled in her limbs
 and smiled, —
 Here hope might think to find what
 hope were worth.

VI.

Past Hades, past Elysium, past the long,
 Slow, smooth, strong lapse of Lethe;
 past the toil
 Wherein all souls are taken as a spoil,
 The Stygian web of waters, — if your
 song
 Be quenched not, O our brethren, but
 be strong
 As ere ye too shook off our temporal
 coil;

VII.

It yet these twain survive your worldly
 breath,
 Joy trampling sorrow, life devouring
 death,
 If perfect life possess your life all
 through,
 And like your words your souls be
 deathless too,
 To-night, of all whom night encompass-
 eth,
 My soul would commune with one soul
 of you.

VIII.

Above the sunset, might I see thine
 eyes
 That were above the sun-dawn in our
 skies,
 Son of the songs of morning, — thine
 that were
 First lights to lighten that rekindling
 air
 Where through men saw the front of
 England rise,
 And heard thine loudest of the lyre-
 notes there, —

IX.

If yet thy fire have not one spark the
 less,
 O Titan, born of her a Titaness,
 Across the sunrise and the sunset's
 mark
 Send of thy lyre one sound, thy fire one
 spark,
 To change this face of our unworthi-
 ness,
 Across this hour dividing light from
 dark;

X.

To change this face of our chill time,
 that hears
 No song like thine of all that crowd
 its ears,
 Of all its lights that lighten all day long
 Sees none like thy most fleet and fiery
 sphere's
 Out-lightening Sirius, — in its twilight
 throng,
 No thunder and no sunrise like thy
 song.

XI.

Hath not the sea-wind swept the sea-
line bare
To pave with stainless fire, through
stainless air,
A passage for thine heavenlier feet to
tread
Ungrieved of earthly floor-work? hath
it spread
No covering splendid as the sun-god's
hair
To veil or to reveal thy lordlier head?

XII.

Hath not the sunset strewn across the
sea
A way majestic enough for thee?
What hour save this should be thine
hour — and mine,
If thou have care of any less divine
Than thine own soul; if thou take
thought of me,
Marlowe, as all my soul takes thought
of thine?

XIII.

Before the moon's face as before the
sun,
The morning star and evening star are
one
For all men's lands as England. Oh, if
night
Hang hard upon us, — ere our day take
flight,
Shed thou some comfort from thy day
long done
On us pale children of the latter light!

XIV.

For surely, brother and master, and
lord and king,
Where'er thy footfall and thy face
make spring
In all souls' eyes that meet thee where-
soe'er,
And have thy soul for sunshine and
sweet air, —
Some late love of thine old live land
should cling,
Some living love of England, round
thee there.

XV.

Here from her shore, across her sunni-
est sea,
My soul makes question of the sun for
thee,
And waves and beams make answer.
When thy feet
Made her ways flowerier and their
flowers more sweet
With childlike passage of a god to be,
Like spray these waves cast off her foe-
men's fleet.

XVI.

Like foam they flung it from her, and
like weed
Its wrecks were washed from scornful
shoal to shoal,
From rock to rock reverberate; and
the whole
Sea laughed and lightened with a death-
less deed
That sowed our enemies in her field for
seed,
And made her shores fit harborage for
thy soul.

XVII.

Then in her green south fields, a poor
man's child,
Thou hadst thy short sweet fill of half-
blown joy,
That ripens all of us for time to cloy
With full-blown pain and passion, ere
the wild
World caught thee by the fiery heart,
and smiled
To make so swift end of the godlike
boy.

XVIII.

For thou, if ever godlike foot there trod
These fields of ours, wert surely like a
god.
Who knows what splendor of strange
dreams was shed
With sacred shadow and glimmer of
gold and red
From hallowed windows, over stone and
sod,
On thine unbowed, bright, insubmissive
head?

XIX.

The shadow stayed not, but the splendor
 stays,
 Our brother, till the last of English days.
 No day nor night on English earth shall
 be
 Forever, spring nor summer, Junes nor
 Mays,
 But somewhat as a sound or gleam of
 thee
 Shall come on us like morning from the
 sea.

XX.

Like sunrise never wholly risen, nor yet
 Quenched; or like sunset never wholly
 set,
 A light to lighten as from living eyes
 The cold, unlit, close lids of one that lies
 Dead, or a ray returned from death's far
 skies
 To fire us living lest our lives forget.

XXI.

For in that heaven what light of lights
 may be,
 What splendor of what stars, what
 spheres of flame
 Sounding, that none may number nor
 may name,
 We know not, even thy brethren; yea,
 not we
 Whose eyes desire the light that light-
 ened thee,
 Whose ways and thine are one way and
 the same.

XXII.

But if the riddles that in sleep we read,
 And trust them not, be flattering truth
 indeed,
 As he that rose our mightiest called
 them,—he,
 Much higher than thou as thou much
 higher than we,—
 There, might we say, all flower of all
 our seed,
 All singing souls are as one sounding
 sea.

XXIII.

All those that here were of thy kind
 and kin,
 Beside thee and below thee, full of love,
 Full-souled for song,—and one alone
 above
 Whose only light folds all your glories
 in —
 With all birds' notes from nightingale
 to dove
 Fill the world whither we too fain would
 win;

XXIV.

The world that sees in heaven the sove-
 reign light
 Of sunlike Shakespeare, and the fiery
 night
 Whose stars were watched of Webster;
 and beneath,
 The twin-souled brethren of the single
 wreath,
 Grown in king's gardens, plucked from
 pastoral heath,
 Wrought with all flowers for all men's
 heart's delight.

XXV.

And that fixed fervor, iron-red like
 Mars,
 In the mid moving tide of tenderer stars,
 That burned on loves and deeds the
 darkest done,
 Athwart the incestuous prisoner's bride-
 house bars;
 And thine, most highest of all their fires
 but one,
 Our morning star, sole risen before the
 sun.

XXVI.

And one light risen since theirs to run
 such race
 Thou hast seen, O Phosphor, from thy
 pride of place.
 Thou hast seen Shelley, him that was
 to thee
 As light to fire or dawn to lightning;
 me,—
 Me likewise, O our brother, shalt thou
 see,
 And I behold thee, face to glorious
 face?

XXVII.

You twain the same swift year of man
 hood swept
 Down the steep darkness, and our father
 wept.
 And from the gleam of Apollonian tears
 A holier aureole rounds your memories,
 kept
 Most fervent-fresh of all the singing
 spheres,
 And April-colored through all months
 and years.

XXVIII.

You twain, fate spared not half your
 fiery span;
 The longer date fulfils the lesser man.
 Ye from beyond the dark dividing date
 Stand smiling, crowned as gods, with
 foot on fate.
 For stronger was your blessing than his
 ban,
 And earliest whom he struck, he struck
 too late.

XXIX.

Yet love and loathing, faith and unfaith
 yet
 Bind less to greater souls in unison,
 And one desire that makes three spirits
 as one
 Takes great and small as in one spirit-
 ual net
 Woven out of hope toward what shall
 yet be done
 Ere hate or love remember or forget;

XXX.

Woven out of faith and hope and love
 too great
 To bear the bonds of life and death
 and fate;
 Woven out of love and hope and faith
 too dear
 To take the print of doubt and change
 and fear;
 And interwoven with lines of wrath and
 hate
 Blood-red with soils of many a sanguine
 year.

XXXI.

Who cannot hate, can love not: if he
 grieve,
 His tears are barren as the unfruitful
 rain
 That rears no harvest from the green
 sea's plain,
 And as thorns crackling this man's laugh
 is vain.
 Nor can belief touch, kindle, smite, re-
 prieve
 His heart who has not heart to dis-
 believe.

XXXII.

But you, most perfect in your hate and
 love,
 Our great twin-spirited brethren; you
 that stand
 Head by head glittering, hand made
 fast in hand,
 And underfoot the fang-drawn worm
 that strove
 To wound you living; from so far above,
 Look love, not scorn, on ours that was
 your land.

XXXIII.

For love we lack, and help and heat
 and light
 To clothe us and to comfort us with
 might.
 What help is ours to take or give? but
 ye —
 Oh, more than sunrise to the blind cold
 sea,
 That wailed aloud with all her waves
 all night,
 Much more, being much more glorious,
 should you be.

XXXIV.

As fire to frost, as ease to toil, as dew
 To flowerless fields, as sleep to slacken-
 ing pain,
 As hope to souls long weaned from
 hope again
 Returning, or as blood revived anew
 To dry-drawn limbs and every pulseless
 vein, —
 Even so toward us should no man be
 but you.

XXXV.

One rose before the sunrise was, and one
 Before the sunset, lovelier than the sun.
 And now the heaven is dark and bright
 and loud
 With wind and starry drift and moon
 and cloud,
 And night's cry rings in straining sheet
 and shroud:
 What help is ours if hope like yours
 be none?

XXXVI.

O well-beloved, our brethren, if ye be,
 Then are we not forsaken. This kind
 earth
 Made fragrant once for all time with
 your birth,
 And bright for all men with your love,
 and worth
 The clasp and kiss and wedlock of the
 sea,
 Were not your mother if not your
 brethren we.

XXXVII.

Because the days were dark with gods
 and kings,
 And in time's hand the old hours of
 time as rods,
 When force and fear set hope and faith
 at odds,
 Ye failed not, nor abased your plume-
 plucked wings;
 And we that front not more disastrous
 things,
 How should we fail in face of kings
 and gods?

XXXVIII.

For now the deep dense plumes of night
 are thinned
 Surely with winnowing of the glimmer-
 ing wind
 Whose feet are fledged with morning;
 and the breath
 Begins in heaven that sings the dark to
 death.
 And all the night wherein men groaned
 and sinned
 Sickens at heart to hear what sundawn
 saith.

XXXIX.

O first-born sons of hope and fairest! ye
 Whose prows first clove the thought
 unsounded sea
 Whence all the dark dead centuries
 rose to bar
 The spirit of man lest truth should
 make him free,
 The sunrise and the sunset, seeing one
 star,
 Take heart as we to know you that ye
 are.

XL.

Ye rise not, and ye set not: we that say
 Ye rise and set like hopes that set and
 rise
 Look yet but seaward from a land-locked
 bay;
 But where at last the sea's line is the
 sky's,
 And truth and hope one sunlight in
 your eyes,
 No sunrise and no sunset marks their
 day.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN.

In a coign of the cliff between lowland
 and highland,
 At the sea-down's edge between wind-
 ward and lee,
 Walled round with rocks as an inland
 island,
 The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
 A girdle of brushwood and thorn en-
 closes
 The steep square slope of the blos-
 somless bed
 Where the weeds that grew green from
 the graves of its roses
 Now lie dead.
 The fields fall southward, abrupt and
 broken,
 To the low last edge of the long lone
 land.
 If a step should sound or a word be
 spoken,
 Would a ghost not rise at the strange
 guest's hand?

So long have the gray bare walks lain
 guestless,
 Through branches and briers if a man
 make way,
 He shall find no life but the sea-wind's,
 restless
 Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and
 stifled
 That crawls by a track none turn to
 climb
 To the strait waste place that the years
 have rifled
 Of all but the thorns that are touched
 not of time.
 The thorns he spares when the rose is
 taken;
 The rocks are left when he wastes
 the plain;
 The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-
 shaken,
 These remain.

Not a flower to be prest of the foot that
 falls not;
 As the heart of a dead man the seed-
 plots are dry;
 From the thicket of thorns whence the
 nightingale calls not,
 Could she call, there were never a
 rose to reply.
 Over the meadows that blossom and
 wither,
 Rings but the note of a sea-bird's
 song.
 Only the sun and the rain come hither
 All year long.

The sun burns sear, and the rain dishev-
 els
 One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless
 breath.
 Only the wind here hovers and revels
 In a round where life seems barren
 as death.
 Here there was laughing of old, there
 was weeping,
 Haply, of lovers none ever will
 know,
 Whose eyes went seaward a hundred
 sleeping
 Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood,
 "Look thither,"
 Did he whisper? "Look forth from
 the flowers to the sea;
 For the foam-flowers endure when the
 rose-blossoms wither,
 And men that love lightly may die —
 But we?"
 And the same wind sang, and the same
 waves whitened,
 And or ever the garden's last petals
 were shed,
 In the lips that had whispered, the eyes
 that had lightened,
 Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and
 then went whither?
 And were one to the end — but what
 end who knows?
 Love deep as the sea as a rose must
 wither,
 As the rose-red seaweed that mocks
 the rose.
 Shall the dead take thought for the
 dead to love them?
 What love was ever as deep as a grave?
 They are loveless now as the grass
 above them
 Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
 Not known of the cliffs and the fields
 and the sea.
 Not a breath of the time that has been
 hovers
 In the air now soft with a summer to
 be.
 Not a breath shall there sweeten the
 seasons hereafter
 Of the flowers or the lovers that
 laugh now or weep,
 When as they that are free now of weep-
 ing and laughter
 We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever;
 Here change may come not till all
 change end.
 From the graves they have made they
 shall rise up never,
 Who have left naught living to rav-
 age and rend.

Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild
ground growing,

While the sun and the rain live, these
shall be ;

Till a last wind's breath, upon all these
blowing,

Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise, and the sheer cliff
crumble,

Till terrace and meadow the deep
gulfs drink,

Till the strength of the waves of the
high tides humble

The fields that lessen, the rocks that
shrink,

Here now in his triumph where all
things falter,

Stretched out on the spoils that his
own hand spread,

As a god self-slain on his own strange
altar,

Death lies dead.

RELICS.

THIS flower that smells of honey and
the sea,

White laurustine, seems in my hand to
be

A white star made of memory long
ago

Lit in the heaven of dear times dead to
me.

A star out of the skies, love used to
know

Here held in hand, a stray left yet to
show

What flowers my heart was full of in
the days

That are long since gone down dead
memory's flow.

Dead memory that revives on doubtful
ways,

Half hearkening what the buried sea
son says,

Out of the world of the unapparent
dead

Where the lost Aprils are, and the lost
Mays.

Flower, once I knew thy star-white
brethren bred

Nigh where the last of all the land
made head

Against the sea, a keen-faced prom
ontory, —

Flowers on salt wind and sprinkled sea
dews fed.

Their hearts were glad of the free
place's glory ;

The wind that sang them all his stormy
story

Had talked all winter to the sleepless
spray,

And as the sea's their hues were hard
and hoary.

Like things born of the sea and the
bright day,

They laughed out at the years that
could not slay,

Live sons and joyous of unquiet
hours,

And stronger than all storms that
range for prey.

And in the close indomitable flow-
ers

A keen-edged odor of the sun and
showers

Was as the smell of the fresh honey-
comb

Made sweet for mouths of none but
paramours.

Out of the hard green wall of leaves
that clomb,

They showed like windfalls of the snow
soft foam,

Or feathers from the weary south-
wind's wing,

Fair as the spray that it came shore-
ward from.

And thou, as white, what word hast
thou to bring ?

If my heart hearken, whereof wilt thou
sing ?

For some sign surely thou, too, hast
to bear

Some word far south was taught thee
of the spring.

White like a white rose, not like these
that were
Taught of the wind's mouth and the
winter air,
Poor tender thing of soft Italian
bloom,
Where once thou grewest, what else
for me grew there?

Born in what spring and on what city's
tomb,
By whose hand wast thou reached, and
plucked for whom?
There hangs about thee, could the
soul's sense tell,
An odor as of love and of love's
doom.

Of days more sweet than thou wast
sweet to smell,
Of flower-soft thoughts that came to
flower and fell,
Of loves that lived a lily's life and
died,
Of dreams now dwelling where dead
roses dwell.

O white birth of the golden mountain-
side
That for the sun's love makes its bosom
wide
At sunrise, and with all its woods and
flowers
Takes in the morning to its heart of
pride!

Thou hast a word of that one land of
ours,
And of the fair town called of the fair
towers,
A word for me of my San Gim-
ignan,
A word of April's greenest-girdled
hours;

Of the breached walls whereon the
wallflowers ran
Called of Saint Fina, breachless now of
man,
Though time with soft feet break
them stone by stone,
Who breaks down hour by hour his
own reign's span;

Of the cliff overcome and overgrown
That all that flowerage clothed as flesh
clothes bone,
That garment of acacias made for
May,
Whereof here lies one witness over-
blown.

The fair brave trees with all their
flowers at play,
How king-like they stood up into the
day!
How sweet the day was with them,
and the night!
Such words of message have dead
flowers to say.

This that the winter and the wind made
bright,
And this that lived upon Italian light,
Before I throw them and these words
away,
Who knows but I what memories too
take flight?

SESTIMA.

I SAW my soul at rest upon a day
As a bird sleeping in the nest of
night,
Among soft leaves that give the star-
light way
To touch its wings but not its eyes
with light;
So that it knew as one in visions may,
And knew not as men waking, of
delight.

This was the measure of my soul's
delight;
It had no power of joy to fly by day,
Nor part in the large lordship of the
light;
But in a secret, moon-beholden way
It had all its will of dreams and pleasant
night,
And all the love and light that sleep-
ers may.

But such life's triumph as men waking
 may
 It might not have to feed its faint
 delight
 Between the stars by night and sun by
 day,
 Shut up with green leaves and a little
 light;
 Because its way was as a lost star's
 way,
 A world's not wholly known of day
 or night.

All loves and dreams and sounds and
 gleams of night
 Made it all music that such minstrels
 may,
 And all they had they gave it of de-
 light;
 But in the full face of the fire of
 day
 What place shall be for any starry
 light,
 What part of heaven in all the wide
 sun's way?

Yet the soul woke not, sleeping by the
 way,
 Watched as a nursling of the large-
 eyed night,
 And sought no strength nor knowledge
 of the day,
 Nor closer touch conclusive of de-
 light,
 Nor mightier joy nor truer than dream
 ers may,
 Nor more of song than they, nor more
 of light.

For who sleeps once, and sees the secret
 light
 Whereby sleep shows the soul a fair-
 er way
 Between the rise and rest of day and
 night,
 Shall care no more to fare as all men
 may,
 But he his place of pain or of delight,
 There shall he dwell, beholding night
 as day.

Song, have thy day, and take thy fill of
 light
 Before the night be fallen across thy
 way;
 Sing while he may, man hath no long
 delight.

A WASTED VIGIL.

I.

COULDEST thou not watch with me one
 hour? Behold,
 Dawn skims the sea with flying feet of
 gold,
 With sudden feet that graze the gradual
 sea:
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

II.

What, not one hour? For star by star
 the night
 Falls, and her thousands world by world
 take flight;
 They die, and day survives, and what
 of thee?
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

III.

Lo, far in heaven the web of night un-
 done,
 And on the sudden sea the gradual sun;
 Wave to wave answers, tree responds
 to tree:
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

IV.

Sunbeam by sunbeam creeps from line
 to line,
 Foam by foam quickens on the bright-
 ening brine;
 Sail by sail passes, flower by flower gets
 free:
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

V.

Last year, a brief while since, an age
 ago,
 A whole year past, with bud and bloom
 and snow,

O moon that wast in heaven, what
friends were we!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

VI.

Old moons, and last year's flowers, and
last year's snows,
Who now saith to thee, moon? or who
saith, rose?
O dust and ashes, once found fair to see!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

VII.

O dust and ashes, once thought sweet
to smell!
With me it is not, is it with thee, well?
O sea-drift blown from windward back
to lee!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

VIII.

The old year's dead hands are full of
their dead flowers,
The old days are full of dead old loves
of ours,
Born as a rose, and briefer born than
she:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

IX.

Could two days live again of that dead
year,
One would say, seeking us and passing
here,
Where is she? and one answering,
Where is he?
Couldst thou not watch with me?

X.

Nay, those two lovers are not anywhere;
If we were they, none knows us what
we were,
Nor aught of all their barren grief and
glee:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XI.

Half false, half fair, all feeble, be my
verse
Upon thee not for blessing nor for
curse,

For some must stand, and some must
fall or flee:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XII.

As a new moon above spent stars thou
wast;
But stars endure after the moon is past,
Couldst thou not watch one hour,
though I watch three?
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XIII.

What of the night? The night is full,
the tide
Storms inland, the most ancient rocks
divide;
Yet some endure, and bow nor head
nor knee:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XIV.

Since thou art not as these are, go thy
ways;
Thou hast no part in all my nights and
days.
Lie still, sleep on, be glad—as such
things be:
Thou couldst not watch with me.

THE COMPLAINT OF LISA.

(*Double Sestina.*)

DECAMERON, x. 7.

THERE is no woman living that draws
breath
So sad as I, though all things sadden
her.
There is not one upon life's weariest
way
Who is weary as I am weary of all but
death.
Toward whom I look as looks the sun-
flower
All day with all his whole soul toward
the sun;
While in the sun's sight I make moan
all day,
And all night on my sleepless maiden
bed

Weep and call out on death, O Love,
 and thee,
 That thou or he would take me to the
 dead,
 And know not what thing evil I have
 done
 That life should lay such heavy hand
 on me.

Alas! Love, what is this thou wouldst
 with me?

What honor shalt thou have to quench
 my breath,
 Or what shall my heart broken profit
 thee?

O Love, O great god Love, what have
 I done,

That thou shouldst hunger so after my
 death?

My heart is harmless as my life's first
 day:

Seek out some false fair woman, and
 plague her

Till her tears even as my tears fill her
 bed:

I am the least flower in thy flowery
 way,

But till my time be come that I be dead,
 Let me live out my flower-time in the
 sun,

Though my leaves shut before the sun
 flower.

O Love, Love, Love, the kingly sun-
 flower!

Shall he the sun hath looked on look
 on me,

That live down here in shade, out of
 the sun,

Here living in the sorrow and shadow
 of death?

Shall he that feeds his heart full of the
 day

Care to give mine eyes light, or my lips
 breath?

Because she loves him, shall my lord
 love her

Who is as a worm in my lord's kingly
 way?

I shall not see him or know him alive
 or dead;

But thou, I know thee, O Love, and
 pray to thee

That in brief while my brief life-days
 be done,
 And the worm quickly make my mar-
 riage-bed.

For underground there is no sleepless
 bed:

But here since I beheld my sunflower
 These eyes have slept not, seeing all
 night and day

His sunlike eyes, and face fronting the
 sun.

Wherefore, if anywhere be any death,
 I would fain find and fold him fast to
 me,

That I may sleep with the world's eld-
 est dead,

With her that died seven centuries
 since, and her

That went last night down the night-
 wandering way.

For this is sleep indeed, when labor is
 done,

Without love, without dreams, and with-
 out breath,

And without thought, O name unnamed!
 of thee.

Ah! but, forgetting all things, shall I
 thee?

Wilt thou not be as now about my bed
 There underground as here before the
 sun?

Shall not thy vision vex me alive and
 dead,

Thy moving vision without form or
 breath?

I read long since the bitter tale of her
 Who read the tale of Launcelot on a
 day,

And died, and had no quiet after death,
 But was moved ever along a weary way,

Lost with her love in the underworld;
 ah me,

O my king, O my lordly sunflower,
 Would God to me, too, such a thing
 were done!

But if such sweet and bitter things be
 done,

Then, flying from life, I shall not fly
 from thee.

For in that living world without a sun

Thy vision will lay hold upon me
 dead,
 And meet and mock me, and mar my
 peace in death.
 Yet if being wroth, God had such pity
 on her,
 Who was a sinner and foolish in her
 day,
 That even in hell they twain should
 breathe one breath,
 Why should he not in some wise pity
 me?
 So if I sleep not in my soft strait bed,
 I may look up and see my sunflower
 As he the sun, in some divine strange
 way.

O poor my heart, well knowest thou in
 what way
 This sore sweet evil unto us was done.
 For on a holy and a heavy day
 I was arisen out of my still small bed
 To see the knights tilt, and one said to
 me
 "The king;" and seeing him, somewhat
 stopped my breath;
 And if the girl spake more, I heard not
 her,
 For only I saw what I shall see when
 dead,
 A kingly flower of knights, a sunflower,
 That shone against the sunlight like
 the sun,
 And like a fire, O heart, consuming
 thee,
 The fire of love that lights the pyre of
 death.

Howbeit I shall not die an evil death
 Who have loved in such a sad and sin-
 less way,
 That this my love, lord, was no shame
 to thee.
 So when mine eyes are shut against the
 sun,
 O my soul's sun, O the world's sun-
 flower,
 Thou nor no man will quite despise me
 dead.
 And dying I pray with all my low last
 breath
 That thy whole life may be as was that
 day,

That feast-day that made trothplight
 death and me,
 Giving the world light of thy great
 deeds done;
 And that fair face brightening thy bri-
 dal bed,
 That God be good as God hath been to
 her.

That all things goodly and glad remain
 with her,
 All things that make glad life and good-
 ly death;
 That as a bee sucks from a sunflower
 Honey, when summer draws delighted
 breath,
 Her soul may drink of thy soul in like
 way,
 And love make life a fruitful marriage-
 bed
 Where day may bring forth fruits of joy
 to day
 And night to night till days and nights
 be dead.
 And as she gives light of her love to
 thee,
 Give thou to her the old glory of days
 long done;
 And either give some heat of light to me,
 To warm me where I sleep without the
 sun.

O sunflower made drunken with the sun,
 O knight whose lady's heart draws thine
 to her,
 Great king, glad lover, I have a word to
 thee.
 There is a weed lives out of the sun's
 way,
 Hid from the heat deep in the meadow's
 bed,
 That swoons and whitens at the wind's
 least breath,
 A flower star-shaped, that all a summer
 day
 Will gaze her soul out on the sunflower
 For very love till twilight finds her dead.
 But the great sunflower heeds not her
 poor death,
 Knows not when all her loving life is
 done;
 And so much knows my lord the king
 of me.

Ay, all day long he has no eye for
 me;
 With golden eye following the golden
 sun
 From rose-colored to purple-pillowed
 bed,
 From birthplace to the flame-lit place of
 death,
 From eastern end to western of his
 way.
 So mine eye follows thee, my sunflower,
 So the white star-flower turns and yearns
 to thee,
 The sick weak weed, not well alive or
 dead,
 Trod under foot if any pass by her,
 Pale, without color of summer or sum-
 mer breath
 In the shrunk shuddering petals, that
 have done
 No work but love, and die before the
 day.

But thou, to-day, to-morrow, and every
 day,
 Be glad and great, O love whose love
 slays me.
 Thy fervent flower made fruitful from
 the sun
 Shall drop its golden seed in the world's
 way,
 That all men thereof nourished shall
 praise thee
 For grain and flower and fruit of works
 well done;
 Till thy shed seed, O shining sunflower,
 Bring forth such growth of the world's
 garden-bed
 As like the sun shall outlive age and
 death.
 And yet I would thine heart had heed
 of her
 Who loves thee alive; but not till she
 be dead.
 Come, Love, then, quickly, and take
 her utmost breath.
 Song, speak for me who am dumb as
 are the dead;
 From my sad bed of tears I send forth
 thee,
 To fly all day from sun's birth to sun's
 death

Down the sun's way after the flying
 sun,
 For love of her that gave thee wings
 and breath
 Ere day be done, to seek the sunflower.

FOR THE FEAST OF GIORDANO BRUNO,

PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR.

I.

SON of the lightning and the light that
 glows
 Beyond the lightning's or the morn-
 ing's light,
 Soul splendid with all-righteous love
 of right,
 In whose keen fire all hopes and fears
 and woes
 Were clean consumed, and from their
 ashes rose
 Transfigured, and intolerable to
 sight
 Save of purged eyes whose lids had
 cast off night,
 In love's and wisdom's likeness when
 they close,
 Embracing, and between them truth
 stands fast,
 Embraced of either; thou whose feet
 were set
 On English earth while this was Eng-
 land yet,
 Our friend that art, our Sidney's friend
 that wast,
 Heart hardier found and higher than all
 men's past,
 Shall we not praise thee though thine
 own forget?

II.

Lift up thy light on us and on thine
 own,
 O soul whose spirit on earth was as
 a rod
 To scourge off priests, a sword to
 pierce their God,
 A staff for man's free thought to walk
 alone,

A lamp to lead him far from shrine and throne
 On ways untrodden where his fathers trod
 Ere earth's heart withered at a high priest's nod,
 And all men's mouths that made not prayer made moan.
 From bonds and torments and the ravening flame,
 Surely thy spirit of sense rose up to greet
 Lucretius, where such only spirits meet,
 And walk with him apart till Shelley came
 To make the heaven of heavens more heavenly sweet,
 And mix with yours a third incorporate name.

AVE ATQUE VALE.

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

Nous devons pourtant lui porter quelques fleurs ;
 Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs,
 Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres,
 Son vent mélancolique à l'entour de leurs marbres,
 Certe, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats.

Les Fleurs du Mal.

I.

SHALL I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
 Brother, on this that was the veil of thee ?
 Or quiet sea-flower moulded by the sea,
 Or simplest growth of meadow-sweet or sorrel,
 Such as the summer-sleepy dryads weave,
 Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve ?

Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before.
 Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat
 And full of bitter summer, but more sweet
 To thee than gleanings of a northern shore
 Trod by no tropic feet ?

II.

For always thee the fervid languid glories
 Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies ;
 Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs
 Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories,
 The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave
 That knows not where is that Leucadian grave
 Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.
 Ah ! salt and sterile as her kisses were,
 The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear
 Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong,
 Blind gods that cannot spare.

III.

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,
 Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us :
 Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,
 Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other
 Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime ;
 The hidden harvest of luxurious time,
 Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech ;
 And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep
 Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep ;
 And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,
 Seeing as men sow men reap.

IV.

O sleepless heart and sombre soul un-
sleeping.
That were athirst for sleep and no
more life
And no more love, for peace and no
more strife!
Now the dim gods of death have in
their keeping
Spirit and body and all the springs
of song,
Is it well now where love can do no
wrong,
Where stinging pleasure has no foam
or fang
Behind the unopening closure of her
lips?
Is it not well where soul from body
slips,
And flesh from bone divides without a
pang
As dew from flower-bell drips?

V.

It is enough: the end and the beginning
Are one thing to thee, who art past
the end.
O hand unclasped of unbeholden
friend!
For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms
for winning,
No triumph and no labor and no lust,
Only dead yew-leaves and a little
dust.
O quiet eyes wherein the light saith
naught,
Whereto the day is dumb, nor any
night
With obscure finger silences your
sight,
Nor in your speech the sudden soul
speaks thought,
Sleep, and have sleep for light.

VI.

Now all strange hours and all strange
loves are over,
Dreams and desires and sombre songs
and sweet,
Hast thou found place at the great
knees and feet
Of some pale Titan-woman like a lover,

Such as thy vision here solicited,
Under the shadow of her fair vast
head,
The deep division of prodigious breasts,
The solemn slope of mighty limbs
asleep,
The weight of awful tresses that still
keep
The savor and shade of old-world pine-
forests
Where the wet hill-winds weep?

VII.

Hast thou found any likeness for thy
vision?
O gardener of strange flowers, what
bud, what bloom,
Hast thou found sown, what gathered
in the gloom?
What of despair, of rapture, of deris-
ion,
What of life is there, what of ill or
good?
Are the fruits gray like dust, or bright
like blood?
Does the dim ground grow any seed of
ours,
The faint fields quicken any terrene
root,
In low lands where the sun and moon
are mute,
And all the stars keep silence? Are
there flowers
At all, or any fruit?

VIII.

Alas! but though my flying song flies
after,
O sweet strange elder singer, thy
more fleet
Singing, and footprints of thy fleeter
feet,
Some dim derision of mysterious laugh-
ter
From the blind tongueless warders of
the dead,
Some gainless glimpse of Proser-
pine's veiled head,
Some little sound of unregarded tears
Wept by effaced unprofitable eyes,
And from pale mouths some cadence
of dead sighs, —

These, only these, the hearkening spirit
hears,
Sees only such things rise.

IX.

Thou art far too far for wings of words
to follow,
Far too far off for thought or any
prayer.
What ails us with thee, who art wind
and air?
What ails us gazing where all seen is
hollow?
Yet with some fancy, yet with some
desire,
Dreams pursue death as winds a fly-
ing fire,
Our dreams pursue our dead, and do
not find.
Still, and more swift than they, the
thin flame flies,
The low light fails us in elusive skies,
Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and
blind
Are still the eluded eyes.

X.

Not thee, oh! never thee, in all time's
changes,
Not thee, but this the sound of thy
sad soul,
The shadow of thy swift spirit, this
shut scroll
I lay my hand on, and not death es-
tranges
My spirit from communion of thy
song;
These memories and these melodies
that throng
Veiled porches of a Muse funereal, —
These I salute, these touch, these
clasp and fold
As though a hand were in my hand
to hold,
Or through mine ears a mourning musi-
cal
Of many mourners rolled.

XI.

Among these, I also, in such station
As when the pyre was charred, and
piled the sods,

And offering to the dead made, and
their gods,
The old mourners had, standing to make
libation,
I stand, and to the gods and to the
dead
Do reverence without prayer or praise,
and shed
Offering to these unknown, the gods of
gloom,
And what of honey and spice my
seed-lands bear,
And what I may of fruits in this
chilled air,
And lay, Orestes-like, across the tomb
A curl of severed hair.

XII.

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,
Not like the low-lying head of Ilim,
the king,
The flame that made of Troy a ruin-
ous thing,
Thou liest, and on this dust no tears
could quicken
There fall no tears like theirs that all
men hear
Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear
Down the opening leaves of holy poets'
pages.
Thee not Orestes, not Electra,
mourns;
But bending us-ward with memorial
urns
The most high Muses that fulfil all ages
Weep, and our God's heart yearns.

XIII.

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not
often
Among us darkling here the lord of
light
Makes manifest his music and his
might
In hearts that open and in lips that
soften
With the soft flame and heat of songs
that shine.
Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter
wine,

And nourished them indeed with bitter
bread;
Yet surely from his hand thy soul's
food came,
The fire that scarred thy spirit at his
flame
Was lighted, and thine hungering heart
he fed
Who feeds our hearts with fame.

XIV.

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sun-
setting,
God of all suns and songs, he too
bends down
To mix his laurel with thy cypress
crown,
And save thy dust from blame and from
forgetting.
Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert
and art,
Compassionate, with sad and sacred
heart,
Mourns thee of many his children the
last dead,
And hallows with strange tears and
alien sighs
Thine unmelodious mouth and sun-
less eyes,
And over thine irrevocable head
Sheds light from the under skies.

xv.

And one weeps with him in the ways
Lethæan,
And stains with tears her changing
bosom chill;
That obscure Venus of the hollow
hill,
That thing transformed which was the
Cytherean,
With lips that lost their Grecian laugh
divine
Long since, and face no more called
Erycine
A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.
Thee also with fair flesh and singing
spell
Did she, a sad and second prey, com-
pel
Into the footless places once more trod,
And shadows hot from hell.

XVI.

And now no sacred staff shall break in
blossom,
No choral salutation lure to light
A spirit sick with perfume and sweet
night
And love's tired eyes and hands and
barren bosom.
There is no help for these things;
none to mend,
And none to mar; not all our songs,
O friend!
Will make death clear, or make life
durable.
Howbeit with rose and ivy and wild
vine
And with wild notes about this dust
of thine
At least I fill the place where white
dreams dwell,
And wreath an unseen shrine.

XVII.

Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee,
pardon,
If sweet, give thanks; thou hast no
more to live;
And to give thanks is good, and to
forgive.
Out of the mystic and the mournful
garden
Where all day through thine hands
in barren braid
Wove the sick flowers of secrecy
and shade,
Green buds of sorrow and sin, and
remnants gray,
Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, san-
guine-hearted,
Passions that sprang from sleep and
thoughts that started,
Shall death not bring us all as thee one
day
Among the days departed?

XVIII.

For thee, oh, now a silent soul, my
brother,
Take at my hands this garland, and
farewell.
Thin is the leaf, and chill the wintry
smell,

And chill the solemn earth, a fatal
mother,
With sadder than the Niobeian womb,
And in the hollow of her breasts a
tomb.
Content thee, howsoc'er, whose days are
done:
There lies not any troublous thing
before,
Nor sight nor sound to war against
thee more,
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore.

MEMORIAL VERSES

ON THE DEATH OF THÉOPHILE GAU-
TIER.

DEATH, what hast thou to do with me?
So saith
Love, with eyes set against the face of
Death;
What have I done, O thou strong
Death, to thee,
That mine own lips should wither from
thy breath?

Though thou be blind as fire or as the
sea,
Why should thy waves and storms make
war on me?
Is it for hate thou hast to find me fair,
Or for desire to kiss, if it might be, —

My very mouth of song, and kill me
there?
So with keen rains vexing his crownless
hair,
With bright feet bruised from no de-
lightful way,
Through darkness and the disenchanted
air, —

Lost Love went weeping half a winter's
day.
And the armed wind that smote him
seemed to say,
How shall the dew live when the
dawn is fled,
Or wherefore should the Mayflower out-
last May?

Then Death took Love by the right
hand, and said,
Smiling, Come now, and look upon thy
dead.

But Love cast down the glories of his
eyes,
And bowed down like a flower his
flowerless head.

And Death spake, saying, What ails
thee in such wise,
Being god, to shut thy sight up from the
skies?

If thou canst see not, hast thou ears
to hear?
Or is thy soul too as a leaf that dies?

Even as he spake with fleshless lips of
fear,

But soft as sleep sings in a tired man's
ear,

Behold, the winter was not, and 'tis
might

Fell, and fruits broke forth of the bar-
ren year.

And upon earth was largess of great
light,

And moving music winged for world-
wide flight,

And shapes and sounds of gods be-
held and heard,

And day's foot set upon the neck of
night.

And with such song the hollow ways
were stirred

As of a god's heart hidden in a bird,
Or as the whole soul of the sun in
spring

Should find full utterance in one flower-
soft word, —

And all the season should break forth
and sing

From one flower's lips, in one rose tri-
umphing;

Such breath and light of song as of a
flame

Made ears and spirits of them that heard
it ring.

And Love beholding knew not for the
same

The shape that led him, nor in face nor
name ;

For he was bright, and great of thews,
and fair,

And in Love's eyes he was not Death,
but Fame.

Not that gray ghost whose life is empty
and bare,

And his limbs moulded out of mortal
air,

A cloud of change that shifts into a
shower,

And dies, and leaves no light for time to
wear ;

But a god clothed with his own joy and
power,

A god re-risen out of his mortal
hour

Immortal, king and lord of time and
space,

With eyes that look on them as from a
tower.

And where he stood the pale sepulchral
place

Bloomed, as new 'life might in a blood
less face,

And where men sorrowing came to
seek a tomb

With funeral flowers and tears for grief
and grace, —

They saw with light as of a world in
bloom

The portal of the House of Fame
illumine

The ways of life wherein we toiling
tread,

And watched the darkness as a brand
consume.

And through the gates where rule the
deathless dead

The sound of a new singer's soul was
shed

That sang among his kinsfolk, and a
beam

Shot from the star on a new ruler's
head ;

A new star lightening the Lethean
stream,

A new song mixed into the song su-
preme

Made of all souls of singers and their
might,

That makes of life and time and death
a dream :

Thy star, thy song, O soul that in our
sight

Wast as a sun that made for man's
delight

Flowers and all fruits in season, be-
ing so near

The sun-god's face, our god that gives
us light.

To him, of all gods that we love or
fear,

Thou among all men by thy name wast
dear, —

Dear to the god that gives us spirit
of song

To bind and burn all hearts of men
that hear ;

The god that makes men's words too
sweet and strong

For life or time or death to do them
wrong,

Who sealed with his thy spirit for a
sign,

And filled it with his breath thy whole
life long ;

Who made thy moist lips fiery with new
wine

Pressed from the grapes of song the
sovereign vine,

And with all love of all things loveli-
est

Gave thy soul power to make them
more divine, —

That thou might'st breathe upon the
breathless rest

Of marble, till the brows and lips and
breast

Felt fall from off them as a cancelled
curse

That speechless sleep wherewith they
lived oppress ;

Who gave thee strength and heat of
spirit to pierce
All clouds of form and color that dis-
perse,
And leave the spirit of beauty to
re-mould
In types of clean chryselephantine
verse;

Who gave thee words more golden than
fine gold
To carve in shapes more glorious than
of old,
And build thy songs up in the sight
of time
As statues set in godhead manifold, —

In sight and scorn of temporal change
and clime
That meet the sun re-risen with refluent
rhyme —
As god to god might answer face to
face —
From lips whereon the morning strikes
sublime.

Dear to the god, our god who gave thee
place
Among the chosen of days, the royal
race,
The lords of light, whose eyes of old
and ears
Saw even on earth and heard him for a
space.

There are the souls of those once mor-
tal years
That wrought with fire of joy and light
of tears,
In words divine as deeds that grew
thereof,
Such music as he swoons with love who
hears.

There are the lives that lighten from
above
Our under lives, the spherul souls that
move
Through the ancient heaven of song-
illuminated air,
Whence we that hear them singing die
with love.

There all the crowned Hellenic heads,
and there
The old gods who made men godlike
as they were,
The lyric lips wherefrom all songs
take fire,
Live eyes, and light of Apollonian hair.

There, round the sovereign passion of
that lyre
Which the stars hear, and tremble with
desire,
The ninefold light Pierian is made one
That here we see divided, and aspire, —
Seeing, after this or that crown to be
won;
But where they hear the singing of the
sun,
All form, all sound, all color, and all
thought
Are as one body and soul in unison.

There the song sung shines as a picture
wrought,
The painted mouths sing that on earth
say naught,
The carven limbs have sense of blood
and growth,
And large-eyed life that seeks nor lacks
not aught.

There all the music of thy living mouth
Lives, and all loves wrought of thine
hand in youth,
And bound about the breasts and
brows with gold,
And colored pale or dusk from north
or south.

Fair living things made to thy will of old,
Born of thy lips, no births of mortal
mould,
That in the world of song about thee
wait
Where thought and truth are one and
manifest.

Within the graven lintels of the gate
That here divides our vision and our fate,
The dreams we walk in and the
truths of sleep,
All sense and spirit have life inseparate.

There, what one thinks, is his to grasp
and keep;

There are no dreams, but very joys to
reap;

No foiled desires that die before de-
light,

No fears to see across our joys, and
weep.

There hast thou all thy will of thought
and sight,

All hope for harvest, and all heaven for
flight;

The sunrise of whose golden-mouthed
glad head

To paler songless ghosts was heat and
light.

Here, where the sunset of our year is
red,

Men think of thee as of the summer
dead,

Gone forth before the snows, before
thy day,

With unshod feet, with brows un-
chapleted.

Couldst thou not wait till age had
wound, they say,

Round those wreathed brows his soft
white blossoms? Nay,

Why shouldst thou vex thy soul with
this harsh air,—

Thy bright-winged soul, once free to
take its way?

Nor for men's reverence hadst thou
need to wear

The holy flower of gray time-hallowed
hair;

Nor were it fit that aught of thee
grew old,

Fair lover all thy days of all things
fair.

And hear we not thy words of molten
gold

Singing? or is their light and heat
a-cold

Whereat men warmed their spirits?
Nay, for all

These yet are with us, ours to hear and
hold.

The lovely laughter, the clear tears, the
call

Of love to love on ways where shadows
fall,

Through doors of dim division and
disguise,

And music made of doubts unmusical

The love that caught strange light from
death's own eyes,¹

And filled death's lips with fiery words
and sighs,

And half asleep let feed from veins
of his

Her close red warm snake's mouth,
Egyptian-wise:

And that great night of love more
strange than this,²

When she that made the whole world's
bale and bliss

Made king of the whole world's de-
sire a slave,

And killed him in mid kingdom with a
kiss;

Veiled loves that shifted shapes and
shafts, and gave,³

Laughing, strange gifts to hands that
durst not crave,

Flowers doubled-blossomed, fruits of
scent and hue

Sweet as the bride-bed, stranger than
the grave;

All joys and wonders of old lives and
new

That ever in love's shine or shadow
grew,

And all the grief whereof he dreams
and grieves,

And all sweet roots fed on his light and
dew;

All these through thee our spirit of
sense perceives,

As threads in the unseen woof of thy music
weaves,

¹ La Morte Amoureuse.

² Une Nuit de Cléopâtre.

³ Mademoiselle de Maupin.

Birds caught and snared that fill our
ears with thee,
ay-blossoms in thy wreath of brow-
bound leaves.

Mixed with the masque of death's old
comedy

Though thou too pass, have here our
flowers, that we

For all the flowers thou gav'st upon
thee shed,

And pass not crownless to Persephone.

Blue lotus-blossoms and white and rosy-
red

We wind with poppies for thy silent
head,

And on this margin of the sundering
sea

Leave thy sweet light to rise upon the
dead.

AGE AND SONG.

(TO BARRY CORNWALL.)

I.

In vain men tell us time can alter

Old loves, or make old memories falter;
That with the old year the old year's
life closes.

The old dew still falls on the old sweet
flowers,

The old sun revives the new-fledged
hours,

The old summer rears the new-born
roses.

II.

Much more a Muse that bears upon her
Raiment and wreath and flower of
honor,

Gathered long since and long since
woven,

Fades not or falls as fall the vernal
Blossoms that bear no fruit eternal,

By summer or winter charred or
cloven.

III.

No time casts down, no time upraises,
Such loves, such memories, and such
praises,

As need no grace of sun or shower,
No saving screen from frost or thunder,
To tend and house around and under
The imperishable and fearless flower

IV.

Old thanks, old thoughts, old aspira-
tions,

Outlive men's lives and lives of na-
tions,

Dead, but for one thing which sur-
vives —

The inalienable and unpriced treasure,
The old joy of power, the old pride of
pleasure,

That lives in light above men's lives.

IN MEMORY OF BARRY CORNWALL.

(OCT. 4, 1874.)

I.

In the garden of death, where the sing-
ers whose names are deathless

One with another make music un-
heard of men,

Where the dead sweet roses fade not
of lips long, breathless,

And the fair eyes shine that shall
weep not or change again,

Who comes now crowned with the
blossom of snow-white years?

What music is this that the world of
the dead men hears?

II.

Beloved of men, whose words on our
lips were honey,

Whose name in our ears and our
fathers' ears was sweet,

Like summer gone forth of the land his
songs made sunny,

To the beautiful veiled bright world
where the glad ghosts meet,

Child, father, bridegroom and bride,
and anguish and rest,

No soul shall pass of a singer than this
more blest.

III.

Blest for the years' sweet sake that were
 filled and brightened,
 As a forest with birds, with the fruit
 and the flower of his song;
 For the souls' sake blest that heard, and
 their cares were lightened,
 For the hearts' sake blest that have
 fostered his name so long;
 By the living and dead lips blest that
 have loved his name,
 And clothed with their praise and
 crowned with their love for fame.

IV.

Ah, fair and fragrant his fame as flowers
 that close not,
 That shrink not by day for heat or
 for cold by night,
 As a thought in the heart shall increase
 when the heart's self knows not,
 Shall endure in our ears as a sound,
 in our eyes as a light;
 Shall wax with the years that wane
 and the seasons' chime,
 As a white rose thornless that grows in
 the garden of time.

V.

The same year calls, and one goes hence
 with another,
 And men sit sad that were glad for
 their sweet songs' sake;
 The same year beckons, and elder with
 younger brother
 Takes mutely the cup from his hand
 that we all shall take.¹
 They pass ere the leaves be past or the
 snows be come;
 And the birds are loud, but the lips
 that outsang them dumb.

VI.

Time takes them home that we loved,
 fair names and famous,
 To the soft long sleep, to the broad
 sweet bosom of death;
 But the flower of their souls he shall
 take not away to shame us,

Nor the lips lack song forever that
 now lack breath.
 For with us shall the music and per-
 fume that die not dwell,
 Though the dead to our dead bid wel-
 come, and we farewell.

EPICEDE.

(James Lorimer Graham died at Florence, April
 30, 1876.)

LIFE may give for love to death
 Little : what are life's gifts worth
 To the dead wrapt round with earth ?
 Yet from lips of living breath
 Sighs or words we are fain to give,
 All that yet, while yet we live,
 Life may give for love to death.

Dead so long before his day,
 Passed out of the Italian sun
 To the dark where all is done
 Fallen upon the verge of May;
 Here at life's and April's end
 How should song salute my friend
 Dead so long before his day ?

Not a kindlier life or sweeter,
 Time, that lights and quenches men,
 Now may quench or light again;
 Mingling with the mystic metre
 Woven of all men's lives with his,
 Not a clearer note than this,
 Not a kindlier life or sweeter.

In this heavenliest part of earth
 He that living loved the light,
 Light and song, may rest aright,
 One in death, if strange in birth,
 With the deathless dead that make
 Life the lovelier for their sake
 In this heavenliest part of earth.

Light, and song, and sleep at last, —
 Struggling hands and suppliant knees
 Get no goodlier gift than these.
 Song that holds remembrance fast,
 Light that lightens death, attend
 Round their graves who have to
 friend
 Light, and song, and sleep at last.

¹ Sydney Dobell died Aug. 22, 1874.

INFERIÆ.

SPRING, and the light and sound of
things on earth
Re-quickening, all within our green
sea's girth;
A time of passage or a time of birth
Fourscore years since as this year,
first and last.

The sun is all about the world we see,
The breath and strength of very spring;
and we
Live, love, and feed on our own hearts:
but he
Whose heart fed mine has passed
into the past.

Past, all things born with sense and
blood and breath;
The flesh hears naught that now the
spirit saith.
If death be like as birth, and birth
as death,
The first was fair — more fair should
be the last.

Fourscore years since, and come but
one month more,
The count were perfect of his mortal
score
Whose sail went seaward yesterday
from shore
To cross the last of many an unsailed
sea.

Light, love, and labor up to life's last
height, —
These three were stars unsetting in his
sight,
Even as the sun is life and heat and
light,
And sets not nor is dark when dark
are we.

The life, the spirit, and the work were one
That here — ah! who shall say, that
here are done?
Not I, that know not; father, not thy son,
For all the darkness of the night and
sea.

MARCH 5, 1877.

A BIRTH-SONG.

(For Olivia Frances Madox Rossetti, born Sept
20, 1875.)

Out of the dark sweet sleep
Where no dreams laugh or weep,
Borne through bright gates of birth
Into the dim sweet light
Where day still dreams of night
While heaven takes form on earth,
White rose of spirit and flesh, red lily
of love,
What note of song have we
Fit for the birds and thee,
Fair nestling couched beneath the
mother-dove?

Nay, in some more divine
Small speechless song of thine
Some news too good for words,
Heart-hushed and smiling, we
Might hope to have of thee,
The youngest of God's birds,
If thy sweet sense might mix itself with
ours,
If ours might understand
The language of thy land,
Ere thine become the tongue of mortal
hours:

Ere thy lips learn too soon
Their soft first human tune,
Sweet, but less sweet than now,
And thy raised eyes to read
Glad and good things indeed,
But none so sweet as thou:
Ere thought lift up their flower-soft lids
to see
What life and love on earth
Bring thee for gifts at birth,
But none so good as thine who hast
given us thee:

Now, ere thy sense forget
The heaven that fills it yet,
Now, sleeping or awake,
If thou couldst tell, or we
Ask and be heard of thee,
For love's undying sake,

From thy dumb lips divine and bright
 mute speech
 Such news might touch our ear
 That then would burn to hear
 Too high a message now for man's to
 reach.

Ere the gold hair of corn
 Had withered wast thou born,
 To make the good time glad;
 The time that but last year
 Fell colder than a tear
 On hearts and hopes turned sad.
 High hopes and hearts requickening in
 thy dawn,
 Even theirs whose life-springs, child,
 Filled thine with life and smiled,
 But then wept blood for half their own
 withdrawn.¹

If death and birth be one,
 And set with rise of sun,
 And truth with dreams divine,
 Some word might come with thee
 From over the still sea
 Deep hid in shade or shine,
 Crossed by the crossing sails of death
 and birth,
 Word of some sweet new thing
 Fit for such lips to bring,
 Some word of love, some afterthought
 of earth.

If love be strong as death,
 By what so natural breath
 As thine could this be said?
 By what so lovely way
 Could love send word to say
 He lives and is not dead?
 Such word alone were fit for only thee,
 If his and thine have met
 Where spirits rise and set,
 His whom we see not, thine whom
 scarce we see:

His there new-born, as thou
 New-born among us now;
 His, here so fruitful-souled,

¹ Oliver Madox Brown died Nov. 5, 1874, in his twentieth year.

Now veiled and silent here,
 Now dumb as thou last year,
 A ghost of one year old:
 If lights that change their sphere in
 changing meet,
 Some ray might his not give
 To thine who wast to live,
 And make thy present with his past life
 sweet?

Let dreams that laugh or weep,
 All glad and sad dreams, sleep;
 Truth more than dreams is dear.
 Let thoughts that change and fly,
 Sweet thoughts and swift, go by;
 More than all thought is here.
 More than all hope can forge, or mem-
 ory feign,
 The life that in our eyes,
 Made out of love's life, lies,
 And flower-like fed with love for sun
 and rain.

Twice royal in his root
 The sweet small olive-shoot
 Here set in sacred earth;
 Twice dowered with glorious grace
 From either heaven-born race
 First blended in its birth;
 Fair god or genius of so fair an hour,
 For love of either name
 Twice crowned, with love and fame,
 Guard and be gracious to the fair-named
 flower.

OCT. 19, 1875.

EX-VOTO.

WHEN their last hour shall rise
 Pale on these mortal eyes,
 Herself like one that dies,
 And kiss me dying
 The cold last kiss, and fold
 Close round my limbs her cold
 Soft shade as raiment rolled,
 And leave them lying, —

If aught my soul would say
 Might move to hear me pray
 The birth-god of my day
 That he might hearken,

This grace my heart should crave, —
To find no landward grave
That worldly springs make brave,
World's winters darken, —

Nor grow through gradual hours
The cold blind seed of flowers
Made by new beams and showers
From limbs that moulder,
Nor take my part with earth;
But find for death's new birth
A bed of larger girth,
More chaste and colder.

Not earth's for spring and fall,
Not earth's at heart, not all
Earth's making, though men call
Earth only mother,
Not hers at heart she bare
Me, but thy child, O fair
Sea, and thy brother's care,
The wind thy brother.

Yours was I born, and ye,
The sea-wind and the sea,
Made all my soul in me
A song forever,
A harp to string and smite
For love's sake of the bright
Wind and the sea's delight,
To fail them never:

Not while on this side death
I hear what either saith,
And drink of either's breath
With heart's thanksgiving
That in my veins like wine
Some sharp salt blood of thine,
Some springtide pulse of brine,
Yet leaps up living.

When thy salt lips well-nigh
Sucked in my mouth's last sigh,
Grudged I so much to die
This death as others?
Was it no ease to think
The chalice from whose brink
Fate gave me death to drink
Was thine, — my mother's?

Thee too, the all-fostering earth,
Fair as thy fairest birth,

More than thy worthiest worth,
We call, we know thee,
More sweet and just and dread
Than live men highest of head
Or even thy holiest dead
Laid low below thee.

The sunbeam on the sheaf,
The dew-fall on the leaf,
All joy, all grace, all grief,
Are thine for giving:
Of thee our loves are born,
Our lives and loves, that mourn
And triumph; tares with corn,
Dead seed with living;

All good and ill things done
In eye-shot of the sun
At last in thee made one
Rest well contented;
All words of all man's breath,
And works he doth or saith,
All wholly done to death,
None long lamented.

A slave to sons of thee,
Thou, seeming, yet art free;
But who shall make the sea
Serve even in seeming?
What plough shall bid it bear
Seed to the sun and the air,
Fruit for thy strong sons' fare,
Fresh wine's foam streaming?

What old-world son of thine,
Made drunk with death as wine,
Hath drunk the bright sea's brine
With lips of laughter?
Thy blood they drink; but he
Who hath drunken of the sea
Once deeper than of thee
Shall drink not after.

Of thee thy sons of men
Drink deep, and thirst again, —
For wine in feasts, and then
In fields for slaughter;
But thirst shall touch not him
Who hath felt with sense grown dim
Rise, covering lip and limb,
The wan sea's water.

All fire of thirst that aches
 The salt sea cools and slakes
 More than all springs or lakes,
 Freshets or shallows;
 Wells where no beam can burn
 Through frondage of the fern
 That hides from hart and hern
 The haunt it hallows.

Peace with all graves on earth
 For death or sleep or birth
 Be away, one in worth
 One with another;
 But when my time shall be,
 O mother, O my sea,
 Alive or dead, take me,
 Me too, my mother!

PASTICHE.

Now the days are all gone over
 Of our singing, love by lover,
 Days of summer-colored seas
 Blown adrift through beam and breeze.

Now the nights are all past over
 Of our dreaming, dreams that hover
 In a mist of fair false things,
 Nights afloat on wide wan wings.

Now the loves with faith for mother,
 Now the fears with hope for brother,
 Scarce are with us as strange words,
 Notes from songs of last year's birds.

Now all good that comes or goes is
 As the smell of last year's roses,
 As the radiance in our eyes
 Shot from summer's ere he dies.

Now the morning faintlier risen
 Seems no god come forth of prison,
 But a bird of plume-plucked wing,
 Pale with thoughts of evening.

Now hath hope, out-raced in running,
 Given the torch up of his cunning,
 And the palm he thought to wear,
 Even to his own strong child, — despair.

BEFORE SUNSET.

IN the lower lands of day
 On the hither side of night,
 There is nothing that will stay,
 There are all things soft to sight;
 Lighted shade and shadowy light
 In the wayside and the way,
 Hours the sun has spared to smite,
 Flowers the rain has left to play.

Shall these hours run down and say
 No good thing of thee and me?
 Time that made us and will slay
 Laughs at love in me and thee;
 But if here the flowers may see
 One whole hour of amorous breath,
 Time shall die, and love shall be
 Lord as time was over death.

SONG.

LOVE laid his sleepless head
 On a thorny rosy bed;
 And his eyes with tears were red,
 And pale his lips as the dead.

And fear and sorrow and scorn
 Kept watch by his head forlorn,
 Till the night was overworn,
 And the world was merry with morn.

And Joy came up with the day,
 And kissed Love's lips as he lay,
 And the watchers ghostly and gray
 Sped from his pillow away.

And his eyes as the dawn grew br'g't,
 And his lips waxed ruddy as light:
 Sorrow may reign for a night,
 But day shall bring back delight.

A VISION OF SPRING IN WINTER.

I.

O TENDER time that love thinks long
 to see,
 Sweet foot of spring that with her
 footfall sows

Late snow-like flowery leavings of the
 snows,
 Be not too long irresolute to be!
 O mother-month, where have they hid-
 den thee?
 Out of the pale time of the flowerless
 rose,
 I reach my heart out toward the spring-
 time lands.
 I stretch my spirit forth to the fair
 hours,
 The purplest of the prime;
 I lean my soul down over them, with
 hands
 Made wide to take the ghostly
 growths of flowers;
 I send my love back to the lovely
 time.

II.

Where has the greenwood hid thy
 gracious head?
 Veiled with what visions while the
 gray world grieves,
 Or muffled with what shadows of
 green leaves,
 With warm intangible green shadows
 spread
 To sweeten the sweet twilight for thy
 bed?
 What sleep enchants thee? what de-
 light deceives?
 Where the deep dreamlike dew before
 the dawn
 Feels not the fingers of the sunlight
 yet
 Its silver web unweave,
 Thy footless ghost on some unfooted
 lawn
 Whose air the unrisen sunbeams fear
 to fret
 Lives a ghost's life of daylong dawn
 and eve.

III.

Sunrise it sees not, neither set of star,
 Large nightfall, nor imperial pleni-
 lune,
 Nor strong sweet shape of the full-
 breasted noon;
 But where the silver-sandalled shadows
 are,

Too soft for arrows of the sun to mar.
 Moves with the mild gait of an un-
 grown moon:
 Hard overhead the half-lit crescent
 swims,
 The tender-colored night draws hard-
 ly breath,
 The light is listening;
 They watch the dawn of slender-shapen
 limbs,
 Virginal, born again of doubtful death,
 Chill foster-father of the weanling
 spring.

IV.

As sweet desire of day before the day,
 As dreams of love before the true
 love born,
 From the outer edge of winter over-
 worn
 The ghost arisen of May before the
 May
 Takes through dim air her unawakened
 way,
 The gracious ghost of morning risen
 ere morn.
 With little unblown breasts and child-
 eyed looks
 Following, the very maid, the girl-
 child spring,
 Lifts windward her bright brows,
 Dips her light feet in warm and moving
 brooks,
 And kindles with her own mouth's
 coloring
 The fearful firstlings of the plume-
 less boughs.

V.

I seek thee sleeping, and awhile I see
 Fair face that art not, how thy maiden
 breath.
 Shall put at last the deadly days to
 death,
 And fill the fields and fire the woods
 with thee,
 And seaward hollows where my feet
 would be
 When heaven shall hear the word
 that April saith

To change the cold heart of the weary
 time,
 To stir and soften all the time to
 tears,
 Tears joyfuller than mirth;
 As even to May's clear height the young
 days climb
 With feet not swifter than those fair
 first years
 Whose flowers revive not with thy
 flowers on earth.

VI.

I would not bid thee, though I might,
 give back
 One good thing youth has given and
 borne away:
 I crave not any comfort of the day
 'That is not, nor on time's re-trodden
 track
 Would turn to meet the white-robed
 hours or black
 That long since left me on their mor-
 tal way;
 Nor light nor love that has been, nor
 the breath
 That comes with morning from the
 sun to be,
 And sets light hope on fire;
 No fruit, no flower thought once too
 fair for death,
 No flower nor hour once fallen from
 life's green tree,
 No leaf once plucked, or once ful-
 filled desire.

VII.

The morning song beneath the stars
 that fled
 With twilight through the moonless
 mountain air,
 While youth with burning lips and
 wreathless hair
 Sang toward the sun that was to crown
 his head,
 Rising; the hopes that triumphed and
 fell dead,
 The sweet swift eyes and songs of
 hours that were,—
 These may'st thou not give back for-
 ever; these.

As at the sea's heart all her wrecks
 lie waste,
 Lie deeper than the sea.
 But flowers thou may'st, and winds, and
 hours of ease,
 And all its April to the world thou
 may'st
 Give back, and half my April back
 to me.

AT PARTING.

FOR a day and night Love sang to us,
 played with us,
 Folded us round from the dark and
 the light;
 And our hearts were fulfilled of the
 music he made with us,
 Made with our hearts and our lips while
 he stayed with us,
 Stayed in mid passage his pinions
 from flight
 For a day and a night.

From his foes that kept watch with his
 wings had he hidden us,
 Covered us close from the eyes that
 would smite,
 From the feet that had tracked and the
 tongues that had chidden us
 Sheltering in shade of the myrtles for-
 bidden us
 Spirit and flesh growing one with
 delight
 For a day and a night.

But his wings will not rest, and his feet
 will not stay for us:
 Morning is here in the joy of its
 might;
 With his breath has he sweetened a
 night and a day for us:
 Now let him pass, and the myrtles make
 way for us;
 Love can but last in us here at his
 height
 For a day and a night.

THE WHITE CZAR.

[In an English magazine of 1877, there appeared a version of some insolent lines addressed by "A Russian Poet to the Empress of India." To these the first of the two following sonnets was designed to serve by way of counterblast. The writer will scarcely be suspected of royalism or imperialism; but it seemed to him that an insult levelled by Muscovite lips at the ruler of England might perhaps be less unfilially than unofficially resented by an Englishman who was also a republican.]

I.

GEHAZI by the hue that chills thy cheek
And Pilate by the hue that sears thine hand
Whence all earth's waters cannot wash the brand
That signs thy soul a manslayer's though thou speak
All Christ, with lips most murderous and most meek —
Thou set thy foot where England's used to stand!
Thou reach thy rod forth over Indian land!
Slave of the slaves that call thee lord, and weak
As their foul tongues who praise thee! son of them
Whose presence put the snows and stars to shame
In centuries dead and damned that reek below
Curse-consecrated, crowned with crime and flame,
To them that bare thee like them shalt thou go
Forth of man's life, — a leper white as snow.

II.

Call for clear water, wash thine hands, be clean,
Cry, *What is truth?* O Pilate! thou shalt know
Haply too soon, and gnash thy teeth for woe
Ere the outer darkness take thee round unseen

That hides the red ghosts of thy race obscene
Bound nine times round with hell's most dolorous flow,
And in its pools thy crownless head lie low
By his of Spain who dared an English queen
With half a world to hearten him for fight,
Till the wind gave his warriors and their might
To shipwreck and the corpse-encumbered sea.
But thou, take heed, ere yet thy lips wax white,
Lest as it was with Philip so it be,
O white of name and red of hand, with thee!

RIZPAH.

How many sons, how many generations,
For how long years hast thou bewept, and known
Nor end of torment nor surcease of moan,
Rachel or Rizpah, wofullest of nations,
Crowned with the crowning sign of desolations,
And couldst not even scare off with hand or groan
Those carrion birds devouring bone by bone
The children of thy thousand tribulations?
Thou wast our warrior once; thy sons long dead
Against a foe less foul than this made head,
Poland, in years that sound and shine afar;
Ere the east beheld in thy bright sword-blade's stead
The rotten corpse-light of the Russian star
That lights towards hell his bond-slaves and their Czar.

TO LOUIS KOSSUTH.

LIGHT of our fathers' eyes, and in our
 own
 Star of the unsetting sunset! for thy
 name,
 That on the front of noon was as a
 flame
 In the great year nigh thirty years ago
 When all the heavens of Europe shook
 and shone
 With stormy wind and lightning,
 keeps its fame
 And bears its witness all day through
 the same.
 Not for past days and great deeds past
 alone,
 Kossuth, we praise thee as our Landor
 praised;
 But that now too we know thy voice
 upraised,—
 Thy voice, the trumpet of the truth
 of God,
 Thine hand, the thunder bearer's, raised
 to smite
 As with heaven's lightning for a
 sword and rod
 Men's heads abased before the Musco-
 vite.

THE PILGRIMS.

Who is your lady of love, O ye that pass
 Singing? and is it for sorrow of that
 which was
 That ye sing sadly or dream of what
 shall be?
 For gladly at once and sadly it
 seems ye sing.
 — Our lady of love by you is un-
 beholden;
 For hands she hath none, nor eyes, nor
 lips, nor golden
 Treasure of hair, nor face nor form.
 But we
 That love, we know her more fair
 than any thing.
 — Is she a queen, having great gifts to
 give?
 — Yea, these that whoso hath seen
 her shall not live

Except he serve her sorrowing, with
 strange pain,
 Travail and bloodshedding and
 bitterer tears;
 And when she bids die he shall surely
 die.
 And he shall leave all things under the
 sky,
 And go forth naked under sun and
 rain,
 And work and wait and watch out
 all his years.
 — Hath she on earth no place of habi-
 tation?
 — Age to age calling, nation answering
 nation,
 Cries out, Where is she? and there
 is none to say;
 For if she be not in the spirit of men,
 For if in the inward soul she hath no
 place,
 In vain they cry unto her, seeking her
 face,
 In vain their mouths make much of
 her; for they
 Cry with vain tongues, till the
 heart lives again.
 — O ye that follow, and have ye no
 repentance?
 For on your brows is written a mortal
 sentence.
 An hieroglyph of sorrow, a fiery sign,
 That in your lives ye shall not
 pause or rest,
 Nor have the sure sweet common love,
 nor keep
 Friends and safe days, nor joy of life
 nor sleep.
 — These have we not, who have one
 thing, the divine
 Face and clear eyes of faith and
 fruitful breast.
 — And ye shall die before your thrones
 be won.
 — Yea, and the changed world and the
 liberal sun
 Shall move and shine without us,
 and we lie
 Dead; but if she too move on
 earth, and live,

- But if the old world with all the old
irons rent
Laugh and give thanks, shall we be
not content?
Nay, we shall rather live, we shall
not die,
Life being so little, and death so
good to give.
- And these men shall forget you. —
Yea, but we
Shall be a part of the earth and the
ancient sea,
And heaven-high air august, and
awful fire,
And all things good; and no man's
heart shall beat
But somewhat in it of our blood once
shed
Shall quiver and quicken, as now in us
the dead
Blood of men slain and the old same
life's desire
Plants in their fiery footprints our
fresh feet.
- But ye that might be clothed with
all things pleasant,
Ye are foolish that put off the fair soft
present,
That clothe yourselves with the cold
future air;
When mother and father and tender
sister and brother
And the old live love that was shall be
as ye,
Dust, and no fruit of loving life shall
be.
- She shall be yet who is more than
all these were,
Than sister or wife or father unto
us or mother.
- Is this worth life, is this, to win for
wages?
I.o, the dead mouths of the awful gray-
grown ages,
The venerable, in the past that is
their prison,
In the outer darkness, in the un-
opening grave,
Laugh, knowing how many as ye now
say have said,
- How many, and all are fallen, are fallen
and dead:
Shall ye dead rise, and these dead
have not risen?
— Not we but she, who is tender,
and swift to save.
- Are ye not weary and faint not by
the way,
Seeing night by night devoured of day
by day,
Seeing hour by hour consumed in
sleepless fire?
Sleepless; and ye too, when shall
ye too sleep?
- We are weary in heart and head, in
hands and feet,
And surely more than all things sleep
were sweet, —
Than all things save the inexorable
desire
Which whoso knoweth shall nei-
ther faint nor weep.
- Is this so sweet that one were fain
to follow?
Is this so sure where all men's hopes
are hollow,
Even this your dream, that by much
tribulation
Ye shall make whole flawed hearts,
and bowed necks straight?
- Nay, though our life were blind, our
death were fruitless,
Not therefore were the whole world's
high hope rootless;
But man to man, nation would turn
to nation,
And the old life live, and the old
great word be great.
- Pass on, then, and pass by us, and
let us be,
For what light think ye after life to
see?
And if the world fare better will ye
know?
And if man triumph who shall
seek you and say?
— Enough of light is this for one life's
span,
That all men born are mortal, but not
man;

And we men bring death lives by
 night to sow,
 That man may reap and eat and
 live by day.

THE LITANY OF NATIONS.

μᾶ Γὰ, μᾶ Γὰ, βοᾶν
 φοβερόν ἀπότρεπε.

ÆSCH. *Supp.* 890.

CHORUS.

IF with voice of words or prayers thy
 sons may reach thee,
 We thy latter sons, the men thine
 after-birth,
 We the children of thy gray-grown
 age, O Earth,
 O our mother everlasting, we beseech
 thee,
 By the sealed and secret ages of thy
 life;
 By the darkness wherein grew thy
 sacred forces;
 By the songs of stars thy sisters in
 their courses;
 By thine own song hoarse and hollow
 and shrill with strife;
 By thy voice distuned and marred of
 modulation;
 By the discord of thy measure's
 march with theirs;
 By the beauties of thy bosom, and
 the cares;
 By thy glory of growth, and splendor
 of thy station;
 By the shame of men thy children, and
 the pride;
 By the pale-checked hope that sleeps
 and weeps and passes,
 As the gray dew from the morning
 mountain grasses;
 By the white-lipped sightless memories
 that abide;
 By the silence and the sound of many
 sorrows;
 By the joys that leapt up living and
 fell dead;
 By the veil that hides thy hands and
 breasts and head,
 Wrought of divers-colored days and
 nights and morrows;

Isis, thou that knowest of God what
 worlds are worth,
 Thou the ghost of God, the mother
 uncreated,
 Soul for whom the floating forceless
 ages waited
 As our forceless fancies wait on thee,
 O Earth;
 Thou the body and soul, the father-god
 and mother,
 If at all it move thee, knowing of all
 things done
 Here where evil things and good
 things are not one,
 But their faces are as fire against each
 other;
 By thy morning and thine evening, night
 and day;
 By the first white light that stirs and
 strives and hovers
 As a bird above the brood her bosom
 covers,
 By the sweet last star that takes the
 westward way;
 By the night whose feet are shod with
 snow or thunder,
 Fledged with plumes of storm, or
 soundless as the dew;
 By the vesture bound of many-folded
 blue
 Round her breathless breasts, and all
 the woven wonder;
 By the golden-growing eastern stream
 of sea;
 By the sounds of sunrise moving in
 the mountains;
 By the forces of the floods and un-
 sealed fountains;
 Thou that badest man be born, bid
 man be free.

GREECE.

I am she that made thee lovely with my
 beauty
 From north to south:
 Mine, the fairest lips, took first the fire
 of duty
 From thine own mouth.
 Mine, the fairest eyes, sought first thy
 laws, and knew them
 Truths undefiled;

Mine, the fairest hands, took freedom
 first into them,
 A weanling child.
 By my light, now he lies sleeping, seen
 above him
 Where none sees other;
 By my dead that loved, and living men
 that love him, —
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

ITALY.

I am she that was the light of thee
 enkindled
 When Greece grew dim;
 She whose life grew up with man's free
 life, and dwindled
 With wane of him;
 She that once by sword and once by
 word imperial
 Struck bright thy gloom;
 And a third time, casting off these years
 funeral,
 Shall burst thy tomb.
 By that bond 'twixt thee and me where-
 at affrighted
 Thy tyrants fear us;
 By that hope and this remembrance re-
 united, —
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

SPAIN.

I am she that set thy seal upon the
 nameless
 West worlds of seas;
 And my sons as brides took unto them
 the tameless
 Hesperides;
 Till my sins and sons through sinless
 lands dispersed,
 With red flame shod,
 Made accurst the name of man, and
 thrice accursed
 The name of God.
 Lest for those past fires the fires of my
 repentance
 Hell's fume yet smother,
 Now my blood would buy remission of
 my sentence, —
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

FRANCE.

I am she that was thy sign and standard-
 bearer,
 Thy voice and cry;
 She that washed thee with her blood,
 and left thee fairer,
 The same was I.
 Were not these the hands that raised
 thee fallen, and fed thee,
 These hands defiled?
 Was not I thy tongue that spake, thine
 eye that led thee, —
 Not I thy child?
 By the darkness on our dreams, and the
 dead errors
 Of dead times near us;
 By the hopes that hang around thee,
 and the terrors, —
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

RUSSIA.

I am she whose hands are strong, and
 her eyes blinded,
 And lips athirst,
 Till upon the night of nations many-
 minded
 One bright day burst;
 Till the myriad stars be molten into
 one light,
 And that light thine;
 Till the soul of man be parcel of the
 sunlight,
 And thine of mine.
 By the snows that blanch not him, nor
 cleanse from slaughter,
 Who slays his brother;
 By the stains and by the chains on me
 thy daughter, —
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

SWITZERLAND.

I am she that shows on mighty limbs
 and maiden
 Nor chain nor stain;
 For what blood can touch these hands
 with gold unladen,
 These feet what chain?
 By the surf of spears one shieldless
 bosom breasted,
 And was my shield,

Till the plume-plucked Austrian vulture-heads twin-crested
Twice drenched the field.
By the snows and souls untrampled
and untroubled
That shine to cheer us,
Light of those to these responsive and
redoubled,—
(*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

GERMANY.

I am she beside whose forest-hidden
fountains
Slept freedom armed;
By the magic born to music in my
mountains,
Heart-chained and charmed.
By those days, the very dream whereof
delivers
My soul from wrong;
By the sounds that make of all my ring-
ing rivers
None knows what song;
By the many tribes and names of my
division
One from another;
By the single eye of sun-compelling
vision,—
(*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

ENGLAND.

I am she that was and was not of thy
chosen,
Free, and not free;
She that fed thy springs, till now her
springs are frozen;
Yet I am she.
By the sea that clothed and sun that
saw me splendid
And fame that crowned,
By the song-fires and the sword-fires
mixed and blended
That robbed me round;
By the star that Milton's soul for Shel-
ley's lighted,
Whose rays insphere us;
By the beacon-bright Republic far-off
sighted,—
(*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

CHORUS.

Turn away from us the cross-blown
blasts of error,
That drown each other;
Turn away the fearful cry, the loud-
tongued terror,
O Earth, O mother!
Turn away their eyes who track, their
hearts who follow,
The pathless past;
Show the soul of man, as summer shows
the swallow,
The way at last.
By the sloth of men that all too long
endure men
On man to tread;
By the cry of men, the bitter cry of
poor men
That faint for bread;
By the blood-sweat of the people in the
garden
Inwalled of kings;
By his passion interceding for their par-
don
Who do these things;
By the sightless souls and fleshless
limbs that labor
For not their fruit;
By the foodless mouth with foodless
heart for neighbor,
That, mad, is mute;
By the child that famine eats as worms
the blossom—
Ah God, the child!—
By the milkless lips that strain the
bloodless bosom
Till woe runs wild;
By the pastures that give grass to feed
the lamb in,
Where men lack meat;
By the cities clad with gold and shame
and famine;
By field and street;
By the people, by the poor man, by the
master
That men call slave;
By the cross-winds of defeat and of
disaster,
By wreck, by wave;
By the helm that keeps us still to sun-
wards driving,
Still eastward bound,

Till, as night-watch ends, day burn on
 eyes reviving,
 And land be found:
 We thy children, that arraign not nor
 impeach thee
 Though no star steer us,
 By the waves that wash the morning
 we beseech thee,
 O mother, hear us!

CHRISTMAS ANTIPHONES

I.

IN CHURCH.

THOU whose birth on earth
 Angels sang to men,
 While thy stars made mirth,
 Saviour, at thy birth,
 This day born again.

As this night was bright
 With thy cradle-ray.
 Very light of light,
 Turn the wild world's night
 To thy perfect day

God whose feet made sweet
 Those wild ways they trod,
 From thy fragrant feet
 Staining field and street
 With the blood of God;

God whose breast is rest
 In the time of strife,
 In thy secret breast
 Sheltering souls opprest
 From the heat of life;

God whose eyes are skies
 Love-lit as with spheres
 By the lights that rise
 To thy watching eyes,
 Orbed lights of tears;

God whose heart hath part
 In all grief that is,
 Was not man's the dart
 That went through thine heart,
 And the wound not his?

Where the pale souls wall,
 Held in bonds of death,
 Where all spirits quail,
 Came thy Godhead pale
 Still from human breath,—

Pale from life and strife,
 Wan with manhood, came
 Forth of mortal life,
 Pierced as with a knife,
 Scarred as with a flame.

Thou the Word and Lord
 In all time and space.
 Heard, beheld, adored,
 With all ages poured
 Forth before thy face, —

Lord, what worth in earth
 Drew thee down to die?
 What therein was worth,
 Lord, thy death and birth?
 What beneath thy sky?

Light above all love
 By thy love was lit,
 And brought down the Dove
 Feathered from above
 With the wings of it.

From the height of night,
 Was not thine the star
 That led forth with night
 By no worldly light
 Wise men from afar?

Yet the wise men's eyes
 Saw thee not more clear
 Than they saw thee rise
 Who in shepherds' guise
 Drew as poor men near.

Yet thy poor endure,
 And are with us yet.
 Be thy name a sure
 Refuge for thy poor
 Whom men's eyes forget.

Thou whose ways we praise,
 Clear alike and dark,
 Keep our works and ways
 This and all thy days
 Safe inside thine ark.

Who shall keep thy sheep,
 Lord, and lose not one?
 Who save one shall keep,
 Lest the shepherds sleep?
 Who beside the Son?

From the grave-deep wave,
 From the sword and flame,
 Thou, even thou, shalt save
 Souls of king and slave
 Only by thy Name.

Light not born with morn
 Or her fires above,
 Jesus virgin-born,
 Held of men in scorn,
 Turn their scorn to love.

Thou whose face gives grace
 As the sun's doth heat,
 Let thy sun-bright face
 Lighten time and space
 Here beneath thy feet.

Bid our peace increase,
 Thou that madest morn;
 Bid oppressions cease;
 Bid the night be peace;
 Bid the day be born.

II.

OUTSIDE CHURCH.

We whose days and ways
 All the night makes dark, —
 What day shall we praise
 Of these weary days
 That our life-drops mark?

We whose mind is blind,
 Fed with hope of naught;
 Wastes of worn mankind,
 Without heart or mind,
 Without meat or thought,

We with strife of life
 Worn till all life cease,
 Want, a whetted knife,
 Sharpening strife on strife,
 How should we love peace?

Ye whose meat is sweet
 And your wine-cup red,
 Us beneath your feet
 Hunger grinds as wheat, —
 Grinds to make you bread.

Ye whose night is bright
 With soft rest and heat,
 Clothed like day with light,
 Us the naked night
 Slays from street to street.

Hath your God no rod,
 That ye tread so light?
 Man on us as God,
 God as man hath trod, —
 Trod us down with might.

We that one by one
 Bleed from either's rod,
 What for us hath done
 Man beneath the sun,
 What for us hath God?

We whose blood is food
 Given your wealth to feed,
 From the Christless rood
 Red with no God's blood,
 But with man's indeed;

How shall we that see
 Night-long overhead
 Life, the flowerless tree,
 Nailed whereon as we
 Were our fathers dead, —

We whose ear can hear,
 Not whose tongue can name,
 Famine, ignorance, fear,
 Bleeding tear by tear
 Year by year of shame, —

Till the dry life die
 Out of bloodless breast.
 Out of beamless eye,
 Out of mouths that cry
 Till death feed with rest, —

How shall we as ye,
 Though ye bid us, pray?
 Though ye call, can we
 Hear you call, or see,
 Though ye show us day?

We whose name is shame,
 We whose souls walk bare,
 Shall we call the same
 God as ye by name,
 Teach our lips your prayer? —

God, forgive and give,
 For His sake who died? —
 Nay, for ours who live,
 How shall we forgive
 Thee, then, on our side?

We whose right to light
 Heaven's high noon denies,
 Whom the blind beams smite
 That for you shine bright,
 And but burn our eyes, —

With what dreams of beams
 Shall we build up day,
 At what sourceless streams
 Seek to drink in dreams
 Ere they pass away?

In what street shall meet,
 At what market-place,
 Your feet and our feet,
 With one goal to greet,
 Having run one race?

What one hope shall ope
 For us all as one
 One same horoscope,
 Where the soul sees hope
 That outburns the sun?

At what shrine what wine,
 At what board what bread,
 Salt as blood or brine,
 Shall we share in sign
 How we poor were fed?

In what hour what power
 Shall we pray for morn,
 If your perfect hour,
 When all day bears flower,
 Not for us is born?

III.

BEYOND CHURCH.

Ye that weep in sleep,
 Souls and bodies bound,
 Ye that all night keep
 Watch for change, and weep
 That no change is found;

Ye that cry and die,
 And the world goes on
 Without ear or eye,
 And the days go by
 Till all days are gone :

Man shall do for you,
 Men the sons of man,
 What no god would do
 That they sought unto
 While the blind years ran.

Brotherhood of good,
 Equal laws and rights,
 Freedom, whose sweet food
 Feeds the multitude
 All their days and nights

With the bread full-fed
 Of her body blest
 And the soul's wine shed
 From her table spread
 Where the world is guest, —

Mingling me and thee,
 When like light of eyes
 Flashed through thee and me
 Truth shall make us free,
 Liberty make wise :

These are they whom day
 Follows and gives light
 Whence they see to slay
 Night, and burn away
 All the seed of night.

What of thine and mine,
 What of want and wealth,
 When one faith is wine
 For my heart and thine,
 And one draught is health?

For no sect elect
Is the soul's wine poured,
And her table decked :
Whom should man reject
From man's common board ?

Gods refuse and choose,
Grudge and sell and spare :
None shall man refuse,
None of all men lose,
None leave out of care.

No man's might of sight
Knows that hour before ;
No man's hand hath might
To put back that light
For one hour the more.

Not though all men call,
Kneeling with void hands,
Shall they see light fall
Till it come for all
Tribes of men and lands.

No desire brings fire
Down from heaven by prayer,
Though man's vain desire
Hang faith's wind-struck lyre
Out in tuneless air.

One hath breath, and saith
What the tune shall be, —
Time, who puts his breath
Into life and death,
Into earth and sea.

To and fro years flow,
Fill their tides and ebb,
As his fingers go
Weaving to and fro
One unfinished web.

All the range of change
Hath its bounds therein,
All the lives that range
All the byways strange
Named of death or sin.

Star from far to star
Speaks, and white moons wake,
Watchful from afar
What the night's ways are
For the morning's sake.

Many names and flames
Pass and flash and fall,
Night-begotten names,
And the night reclaims,
As she bare them, all.

But the sun is one,
And the sun's name Right ;
And when light is none
Saving of the sun,
All men shall have light

All shall see and be
Parcel of the morn :
Ay, though blind were we,
None shall choose but see
When that day is born.

MATER DOLOROSA.

Citoyen, lui dit Enjolras, ma mère, c'est la République. — *Les Misérables.*

WHO is it that sits by the way, by the
wild wayside,
In a rent stained raiment, the robe of a
cast-off bride,
In the dust, in the rainfall sitting, with
soiled feet bare,
With the night for a garment upon her,
with torn wet hair ?
She is fairer of face than the daughters
of men, and her eyes,
Worn through with her tears, are deep
as the depth of skies.

This is she for whose sake being fallen,
for whose abject sake,
Earth groans in the blackness of dark-
ness, and men's hearts break.
This is she for whose love, having seen
her, the men that were
Poured life out as water, and shed their
souls upon air.
This is she for whose glory their years
were counted as foam ;
Whose face was a light upon Greece,
was a fire upon Rome.

Is it now not surely a vain thing, a fool-
ish and vain,
To sit down by her, mourn to her, serve
her, partake in the pain ?

She is gray with the dust of time on
 his manifold ways,
 Where her faint feet stumble and falter
 through yearlong days.
 Shall she help us at all, O fools, give
 fruit or give fame,
 Who herself is a name despised, a
 rejected name?

We have not served her for guerdon.
 If any do so,
 That his mouth may be sweet with such
 honey, we care not to know.
 We have drunk from a wine-unsweet-
 ened, a perilous cup,
 A draught very bitter. The kings of
 the earth stood up,
 And the rulers took counsel together,
 to smite her and slay;
 And the blood of her wounds is given
 us to drink to-day.

Can these bones live? or the leaves
 that are dead leaves bud?
 Or the dead blood drawn from her
 veins be in your veins blood?
 Will ye gather up water again that was
 drawn and shed?
 In the blood is the life of the veins, and
 her veins are dead.
 For the lives that are over are over, and
 past things past;
 She had her day, and it is not; was first,
 and is last.

Is it nothing unto you, then, all ye that
 pass by,
 If her breath be left in her lips, if she
 live now or die?
 Behold now, O people, and say if she
 be not fair,
 Whom your fathers followed to find
 her, with praise and prayer,
 And rejoiced, having found her, though
 roof they had none, nor bread.
 But ye care not: what is it to you if
 her day be dead?

It was well with our fathers; their
 sound was in all men's lands;
 There was fire in their hearts, and the
 hunger of fight in their hands.

Naked and strong they went forth in
 her strength like flame,
 For her love's and her name's sake of
 old, her republican name.
 But their children, by kings made quiet,
 by priests made wise,
 Love better the heat of their hearths
 than the light of her eyes.

Are they children of these thy children
 indeed, who have sold,
 O golden goddess, the light of thy face
 for gold?
 Are they sons indeed of the sons of thy
 dayspring of hope,
 Whose lives are in fief of an emperor,
 whose souls of a Pope?
 Hide then thine head, O beloved! thy
 time is done;
 Thy kingdom is broken in heaven, and
 blind thy sun.

What sleep is upon you, to dream she
 indeed shall rise,
 When the hopes are dead in her heart
 as the tears in her eyes?
 If ye sing of her dead, will she stir? if
 ye weep for her, weep?
 Come away now, leave her: what hath
 she to do but sleep?
 But ye that mourn are alive, and have
 years to be;
 And life is good, and the world is wiser
 than we.

Yea, wise is the world and mighty, with
 years to give,
 And years to promise; but how long
 now shall it live?
 And foolish and poor is faith, and her
 ways are bare,
 Till she find the way of the sun, and the
 morning air.
 In that hour shall this dead face shine
 as the face of the sun,
 And the soul of man and her soul and
 the world's be one.

MATER TRIUMPHIALIS.

MOTHER of man's time-travelling generations,

Breath of his nostrils, heart-blood of his heart,

God above all gods, worshipped of all nations,

Light above light, law beyond law, thou art.

Thy face is as a sword, smiting in sun-
der

Shadows and chains, and dreams and iron things;

The sea is dumb before thy face, the thunder

Silent, the skies are narrower than thy wings.

Angels and gods, spirit and sense, thou takest

In thy right hand as drops of dust or dew;

The temples and the towers of time thou breakest,

His thoughts and words and works, to make them new.

All we have wandered from thy ways, have hidden

Eyes from thy glory and ears from calls they heard;

Called of thy trumpets vainly, called and chidden,

Scourged of thy speech, and wounded of thy word.

We have known thee, and have not known thee; stood beside thee,

Felt thy lips breathe, set foot where thy feet trod,

Loved and renounced, and worshipped and denied thee,

As though thou wert but as another god.

"One hour for sleep," we said, "and yet one other;

All day we served her, and who shall serve by night?"

Not knowing of thee, thy face not knowing, O mother,
O light wherethrough the darkness is as light.

Men that forsook thee hast thou not forsaken,

Races of men that knew not hast thou known;

Nations that slept thou hast doubted not to waken,

Worshippers of strange gods to make thine own.

All old gray histories hiding thy clear features,

O secret spirit and sovereign, all men's tales,

Creeds woven of men, thy children and thy creatures,

They have woven for vestures of thee and for veils.

Thine hands, without election or exemption,

Feed all men fainting from false peace or strife,

O thou, the resurrection and redemption,

The godhead and the manhood and the life.

Thy wings shadow the waters; thine eyes lighten

The horror of the hollows of the night;

The depths of the earth and the dark places brighten

Under thy feet, whiter than fire is white.

Death is subdued to thee, and hell's bands broken;

Where thou art only is heaven: who hears not thee,

Time shall not hear him; when men's names are spoken,

A nameless sign of death shall his name be.

Deathless shall be the death, the name
 be nameless;
 Sterile of stars his twilight time of
 breath;
 With fire of hell shall shame consume
 him shameless,
 And dying, all the night darken his
 death.

The years are as thy garments, the
 world's ages
 As sandals bound and loosed from
 thy swift feet;
 Time serves before thee, as one that
 hath for wages
 Praise or shame only, bitter words
 or sweet.

Thou sayest "Well done," and all a
 century kindles;
 Again, thou sayest, "Depart from
 sight of me,"
 And all the light of face of all men
 dwindles,
 And the age is as the broken glass
 of thee.

The night is as a seal set on men's
 faces,
 On faces fallen of men that take no
 light,
 Nor give light in the deeps of the dark
 places,
 Blind things, incorporate with the
 body of night.

Their souls are serpents winter-bound
 and frozen,
 Their shame is as a tame beast, at
 their feet
 Couched; their cold lips deride thee
 and thy chosen,
 Their lying lips made gray with dust
 for meat.

Then when their time is full and days
 run over,
 The splendor of thy sudden brow
 made bare
 Darkens the morning; thy bared hands
 uncover
 The veils of light and night and the
 awful air.

And the world naked as a new-born
 maiden
 Stands virginal and splendid as at
 birth,
 With all thine heaven of all its light
 unladen,
 Of all its love unburdened all thine
 earth.

For the utter earth and the utter air of
 heaven,
 And the extreme depth is thine, and
 the extreme height;
 Shadows of things and veils of ages
 riven
 Are as men's kings unkingdomed in
 thy sight.

Through the iron years, the centuries
 brazen-gated,
 By the ages' barred, impenetrable
 doors,
 From the evening to the morning have
 we waited,
 Should thy foot haply sound on the
 awful floors.

The floors untrodden of the sun's feet
 glimmer,
 The star-unstricken pavements of the
 night;
 Do the lights burn inside? the lights
 wax dimmer
 On festal faces withering out of sight.

The crowned heads lose the light on
 them; it may be
 Dawn is at hand to smite the loud
 feast dumb;
 To bind the torch-lit centuries till the
 day be,
 The feasting kingdoms till thy king-
 dome come.

Shall it not come? deny they or dis-
 semble,
 Is it not even as lightning from on
 high
 Now? and though many a soul close
 eyes, and tremble,
 How should they tremble at all who
 love thee as I?

I am thine harp between thine hands,
 O mother!
 All my strong chords are strained
 with love of thee.
 We grapple in love and wrestle, as each
 with other
 Wrestle the wind and the reluctant
 sea.

I am no courtier of thee sober-suited,
 Who loves a little for a little pay
 Me not thy winds and storms, nor
 thrones disrooted,
 Nor molten crowns, nor thine own
 sins, dismay.

Sinned hast thou sometime, therefore
 art thou sinless;
 Stained hast thou been, who art
 therefore without stain;
 Even as man's soul is kin to thee, but
 kinless
 Thou, in whose womb Time sows the
 all-various grain.

I do not bid thee spare me, O dreadful
 mother!
 I pray thee that thou spare not, of
 thy grace.
 How were it with me then, if ever
 another
 Should come to stand before thee in
 this my place?

I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy
 clarion,
 Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy
 breath;
 The graves of souls born worms, and
 creeds grown carrion
 Thy blast of judgment fills with fires
 of death.

Thou art the player whose organ-keys
 are thunders,
 And I, beneath thy foot, the pedal
 prest;
 Thou art the ray whereat the rent night
 sunders,
 And I the cloudlet borne upon thy
 breast.

I shall burn up before thee, pass and
 perish,
 As haze in sunrise on the red sea-
 line;
 But thou from dawn to sunseting shalt
 cherish
 The thoughts that led and souls that
 lighted mine.

Reared between night and noon and
 truth and error,
 Each twilight-travelling bird that
 trills and screams
 Sickens at midday, nor can face for
 terror
 The imperious heaven's inevitable
 extremes.

I have no spirit of skill with equal
 fingers
 At sign to sharpen or to slacken
 strings;
 I keep no time of song with gold-
 perched singers
 And chirp of linnets on the wrists of
 kings.

I am thy storm-thrush of the days that
 darken,
 Thy petrel in the foam that bears thy
 bark
 To port through night and tempest: if
 thou hearken,
 My voice is in thy heaven before the
 lark.

My song is in the mist that hides thy
 morning,
 My cry is up before the day for
 thee,
 I have heard thee and beheld thee and
 give warning,
 Before thy wheels divide the sky and
 sea.

Birds shall wake with thee voiced and
 feathered fairer,
 To see in summer what I see in
 spring:
 I have eyes and heart to endure thee,
 O thunder-bearer,
 And they shall be who shall have
 tongues to sing.

I have love at least, and have not fear,
and part not

From thine unnavigable and wingless
way;

Thou tarriest, and I have not said thou
art not,

Nor all thy night long have denied
thy day.

Darkness to daylight shall lift up thy
pæan,

Hill to hill thunder, vale cry back to
vale,

With wind-notes as of eagles Æschy-
lean,

And Sappho singing in the nightin-
gale.

Sung to by mighty sons of dawn and
daughters,

Of this night's songs thine ear shall
keep but one,—

That supreme song which shook the
channelled waters,

And called thee skyward as God calls
the sun.

Come, though all heaven again be fire
above thee;

Though death before thee come to
clear thy sky;

Let us but see in his thy face who love
thee;

Yea, though thou slay us, arise, and
let us die.

SIENA.

INSIDE this northern summer's fold
The fields are full of naked gold,
Broadcast from heaven on lands it
loves;

The green veiled air is full of doves;
Soft leaves that sift the sunbeams let
Light on the small warm grasses wet
Fall in short broken kisses sweet,
And break again like waves that beat
Round the sun's feet.

But I, for all this English mirth
Of golden-shod and dancing days,

And the old green-girt sweet-hearted
earth,

Desire what here no spells can raise.
Far hence, with holier heavens above,

The lovely city of my love
Bathes deep in the sun-satiate air
That flows round no fair thing more
fair,

Her beauty bare.

There the utter sky is holier, there
More pure the intense white height of
air,

More clear men's eyes that mine would
meet,

And the sweet springs of things more
sweet.

There, for this one warm note of doves
A clamor of a thousand loves
Storms the night's ear, the day's assaults,
From the tempestuous nightingales,
And fills, and fails.

O gracious city well-beloved!

Italian, and a maiden crowned,
Siena, my feet are no more moved
Toward thy strange shapen moun-
tain-bound;

But my heart in me turns and moves,

O lady loveliest of my loves,
Toward thee, to lie before thy feet,
And gaze from thy fair fountain-seat
Up the sheer street;

And the house midway hanging see
That saw Saint Catherine bodily,
Felt on its floors her sweet feet move,
And the live light of fiery love
Burn from her beautiful strange face,
As in the sanguine sacred place
Where in pure hands she took the head
Severed, and with pure lips still red
Kissed the lips dead.

For years through, sweetest of the
saints,

In quiet without cease she wrought,
Till cries of men and fierce complaints
From outward moved her maiden
thought;

And prayers she heard and sighs toward
France,—

“God, send us back deliverance,

Send back thy servant, lest we die!"
 With an exceeding bitter cry
 They smote the sky.

Then in her sacred saving hands
 She took the sorrows of the lands,
 With maiden palms she lifted up
 The sick time's blood-imbittered cup,
 And in her virgin garment furl'd
 The faint limbs of a wounded world.
 Clothed with calm love and clear desire,
 She went forth in her soul's attire,
 A missive fire.

Across the might of men that strove
 It shone, and over heads of kings;
 And molten in red flames of love
 Were swords and many monstrous
 things;
 And shields were lowered, and snapt
 were spears,
 And sweeter tuned the clamorous years;
 And faith came back, and peace, that
 were
 Fled; for she bade, saying, "Thou,
 God's heir,
 Hast thou no care?"

"Lo, men lay waste thine heritage
 Still, and much heathen people rage
 Against thee, and devise vain things.
 What comfort in the face of kings,
 What counsel is there? Turn thine
 eyes
 And thine heart from them in like wise;
 Turn thee unto thine holy place
 To help us that of God for grace
 Require thy face.

"For who shall hear us if not thou
 In a strange land? what doest thou
 there?
 Thy sheep are spoiled, and the plough-
 ers plough
 Upon us: why hast thou no care
 For all this, and beyond strange hills
 Liest unregardful what snow chills
 Thy foldless flock, or what rains beat?
 Lo, in thine ears, before thy feet,
 Thy lost sheep bleat.

"And strange men feed on faultless
 lives,
 And there is blood, and men put knives,
 Shepherd, unto the young lamb's throat;
 And one hath eaten, and one smote,
 And one had hunger and is fed
 Full of the flesh of these, and red
 With blood of these as who drinks
 wine.
 And God knoweth, who hath sent thee
 a sign,
 If these were thine."

But the Pope's heart within him burned,
 So that he rose up, seeing the sign
 And came among them; but she turned
 Back to her daily way divine,
 And fed her faith with silent things,
 And lived her life with curbed white
 wings,
 And mixed herself with heaven, and
 died;
 And now on the sheer city-side
 Smiles like a bride.

You see her in the fresh clear gloom,
 Where walls shut out the flame and
 bloom
 Of full-breathed summer, and the roof
 Keeps the keen ardent air aloof
 And sweet weight of the violent sky:
 There bodily beheld on high,
 She seems as one hearing in tune
 Heaven within heaven, at heaven's full
 noon,
 In sacred swoon, —

A solemn swoon of sense that aches
 With imminent blind heat of heaven,
 While all the wide-eyed spirit wakes,
 Vigilant of the supreme Seven,
 Whose choral flames in God's sight
 move,
 Made unendurable with love,
 That without wind or blast of breath
 Compels all things, through life and
 death,
 Whither God saith.

There on the dim side-chapel wall
 Thy mighty touch memorial,
 Razzi, raised up, for ages dead,
 And fixed for us her heavenly head;

And, rent with plaited thorn and rod,
 Bared the live likeness of her God
 To men's eyes turning from strange
 lands,
 Where, pale from thine immortal hands,
 Christ wounded stands;

And the blood blots his holy hair
 And white brows over hungering eyes
 That plead against us, and the fair
 Mute lips forlorn of words or sighs
 In the great torment that bends down
 His bruised head with the bloomless
 crown,
 White as the unfruitful thorn-flower,—
 A God beheld in dreams that were
 Beheld of her.

In vain on all these sins and years
 Falls the sad blood, fall the slow tears,—
 In vain poured forth as water-springs,
 Priests, on your altars, and ye, kings,
 About your seats of sanguine gold:
 Still your God, spat upon and sold,
 Bleeds at your hands; but now is gone
 All his flock from him saving one,—
 Judas alone.

Surely your race it was that he,
 O men signed backward with his
 name!
 Beholding in Gethsemane,
 Bled the red bitter sweat of shame,
 Knowing how the word of Christian
 should
 Mean to men evil and not good,
 Seem to men shameful for your sake,
 Whose lips, for all the prayers they
 make,
 Man's blood must slake.

But blood nor tears ye love not, you
 That my love leads my longing to,
 Fair as the world's old faith of flowers,
 O golden goddesses of ours!
 From what Idalian rose-pleasance
 Hath Aphrodite bidden glance
 The lovelier lightnings of your feet?
 From what sweet Paphian sward or
 seat
 Led you more sweet?

O white three sisters, three as one.
 With flower-like arms for flowery
 bands,
 Your linked limbs glitter like the sun,
 And time lies beaten at your hands.
 Time and wild years and wars and men
 Pass, and ye care not whence or when;
 With calm lips over-sweet for scorn,
 Ye watch night pass, O children born
 Of the old-world morn!

Ah! in this strange and shrineless place,
 What doth a goddess, what a Grace,
 Where no Greek worships her shrined
 limbs
 With wreaths and Cytherean hymns?
 Where no lute makes luxurious
 The adoring airs in Amathus,
 Till the maid, knowing her mother near,
 Sobs with love, aching with sweet fear?
 What do ye here?

For the outer land is sad, and wears
 A raiment of a flaming fire;
 And the fierce fruitless mountain stairs
 Climb, yet seem wrath and loath to
 aspire,—
 Climb, and break; and are broken down,
 And through their clefts and crests the
 town
 Looks west, and sees the dead sun lie,
 In sanguine death that stains the sky
 With angry dye.

And from the war-worn wastes without
 In twilight, in the time of doubt,
 One sound comes of one whisper, where
 Moved with low motions of slow air
 The great trees nigh the castle swing
 In the sad-colored evening:
 "*Ricorditi di me, che son
 La Pia*,"—that small sweet word alone
 Is not yet gone.

"*Ricorditi di me*,"—the sound
 Sole out of deep dumb days remote,
 Across the fiery and fatal ground
 Comes tender as a hurt bird's note
 To where, a ghost with empty hands,
 A woe-worn ghost, her palace stands
 In the mid city, where the strong
 Bells turn the sunset air to song,
 And the towers throng.

With other face, with speech the same,
A mightier maiden's likeness came
Late among mourning men that slept,
A sacred ghost that went and wept,
White as the passion-wounded Lamb,
Saying, "Ah, remember me, that am
Italia." (From deep sea to sea
Earth heard, earth knew her, that this
was she.)

"*Ricorditi.*"

"Love made me of all things fairest
thing,
And Hate unmade me; this knows
he
Who with God's sacerdotal ring
Enringed mine hand, espousing me."
Yea, in thy myriad-mooded woe,
Yea, Mother, hast thou not said so?
Have not our hearts within us stirred,
'O thou most boliest, at thy word?
Have we not heard?

As this dead tragic land that she
Found deadly, such was time to thee;
Years passed thee withering in the red
Maremma, — years that deemed thee
dead,
Ages that sorrowed or that scorned;
And all this while, though all they
mourned,
Thou sawest the end of things unclean,
And the unborn that should see thee a
queen.
Have we not seen?

The weary poet, thy sad son,
Upon thy soil, under thy skies,
Saw all Italian things save one, —
Italia: this thing missed his eyes;
The old mother-might, the breast, the
face,
That reared, that lit the Roman race, —
This not Leopardi saw; but we,
What is it, Mother, that we see, —
What, if not thee?

Look thou from Siena southward home,
Where the priest's pall hangs rent on
Rome,
And through the red rent swaddling-
bands
Toward thine she strains her labouring
hands.

Look thou and listen, and let be
All the dead quick, all the bond free;
In the blind eyes let there be sight;
In the eighteen centuries of the night
Let there be light.

Bow down the beauty of thine head,
Sweet, and with lips of living breath
Kiss thy sons sleeping and thy dead,
That there be no more sleep or
death.
Give us thy light, thy might, thy love,
Whom thy face seen afar above
Drew to thy feet: and when, being free,
Thou hast blest thy children born to
thee,
Bless also me, —

Me, that when others played or slept,
Sat still under thy cross, and wept;
Me, who so early and unaware
Felt fall on bent bared brows and hair
(Thin drops of the overflowing flood!)
The bitter blessing of thy blood,
The sacred shadow of thy pain,
Thine, the true maiden-mother, slain
And raised again;

Me, consecrated, if I might,
To praise thee, or to love at least,
O mother of all men's dear delight,
Thou madest a choral-souled boy-
priest,
Before my lips had leave to sing,
Or my hands hardly strength to cling
About the intolerable tree
Whereto they had nailed my heart and
thee,
And said, "Let be."

For to thee too, the high Fates gave
Grace to be sacrificed and save,
That being arisen, in the equal sun,
God and the People should be one;
By those red roads thy footprints trod,
Man more divine, more human God,
Saviour; that where no light was
known
But darkness, and a daytime flown,
Light should be shown.

Let there be light, O Italy!
 For our feet falter in the night.
 O lamp of living years to be,
 O light of God, let there be light!
 Fill with a love keener than flame
 Men sealed in spirit with thy name,
 The cities and the Roman skies,
 Where men with other than man's eyes
 Saw thy sun rise.

For theirs thou wast, and thine were
 they,
 Whose names outshine thy very day:
 For they are thine, and theirs thou art,
 Whose blood beats living in man's
 heart,
 Remembering ages fled and dead
 Wherein for thy sake these men bled;
 They that saw Trebia, they that see
 Mentana, they in years to be
 That shall see thee.

For thine are all of us, and ours
 Thou; till the seasons bring to birth
 A perfect people, and all the powers
 Be with them that bear fruit on
 earth:
 Till the inner heart of man be one
 With freedom, and the sovereign sun;
 And Time, in likeness of a guide,
 Lead the Republic as a bride
 Up to God's side.

COR CORDIUM.

O HEART of hearts, the chalice of
 love's fire,
 Hid round with flowers and all the
 bounty of bloom;
 O wonderful and perfect heart, for
 whom
 The lyrist liberty made life a lyre;
 O heavenly heart, at whose most dear
 desire
 Dead Love, living and singing, cleft
 his tomb,
 And with him risen and regent in
 death's room
 All day thy choral pulses rang full
 choir;

O hearts whose beating blood was run-
 ning song,
 O sole thing sweeter than thine own
 songs were,
 Help us for thy free love's sake to
 be free,
 True for thy truth's sake, for thy
 strength's sake strong,
 Till very liberty make clean and fair
 The nursing earth as the sepul-
 chral sea.

TIRESIAS.

PART I.

It is an hour before the hour of dawn.
 Set in mine hand my staff, and leave
 me here
 Outside the hollow house that blind
 men fear,
 More blind than I who live on life
 withdrawn,
 And feel on eyes that see not but
 foresee
 The shadow of death which clothes
 Antigone.

Here lay her living body that here lies
 Dead, if man living know what thing
 is death,
 If life be all made up of blood and
 breath,
 And no sense be save as of ears and
 eyes.
 But heart there is not, tongue there
 is not found,
 To think or sing what verge hath life
 or bound.

In the beginning when the powers that
 made
 The young child man a little loved
 him, seeing
 His joy of life and fair face of his
 being,
 And bland and laughing with the man-
 child played,
 As friends they saw on our divine
 one day,
 King Cadmus take to queen Harmonia.

The strength of soul that builds up as
 with hands,
 Walls spiritual and towers and towns
 of thought
 Which only fate, not force, can bring
 to naught,
 Took then to wife the light of all men's
 lands,
 War's child, and love's, most sweet
 and wise and strong.
 Order of things and rule and guiding
 song.

It was long since: yea, even the sun
 that saw
 Remembers hardly what was, nor
 how long;
 And now the wise heart of the
 worldly song
 Is perished, and the holy hand of law
 Can set no tune on time, nor help
 again
 The power of thought to build up life
 for men.

Yea, surely are they now transformed
 or dead,
 And sleep below this world, where
 no sun warms,
 Or move about it now in formless
 forms
 Incognizable, and all their lordship
 fled;
 And where they stood up singing,
 crawl and hiss
 With fangs that kill behind their lips
 that kiss.

Yet though her marriage-garment, seem-
 ing fair,
 Was dyed in sin and woven of jeal-
 ously
 To turn their seed to poison, time
 shall see
 The gods re-issue from them, and repair
 Their broken stamp of godhead, and
 again
 Thought and wise love sing words of
 law to men.

I, Tiresias the prophet, seeing in Thebes
 Much evil, and the misery of men's
 hands

Who sow with fruitless wheat the
 stones and sands,
 With fruitful thorns the fallows and
 warm glebes,
 Bade their hands hold lest worse hap
 come to pass,
 But which of you had heed of Tiresias?

I am as Time's self in mine own wearied mind,
 Whom the strong heavy-footed years
 have led
 From night to night and dead men
 unto dead,
 And from the blind hope to the memory blind;
 For each man's life is woven, as
 Time's life is,
 Of blind young hopes and old blind
 memories.

I am a soul outside of death and birth.
 I see before me and afterward I see,
 O child, O corpse, the live dead face
 of thee,
 Whose life and death are one thing
 upon earth
 Where day kills night and night again
 kills day
 And dies; but where is that Harmonia?

O all-beholden light not seen of me!
 Air, and warm winds that under the
 sun's eye
 Stretch your strong wings at morn-
 ing; and thou, sky,
 Whose hollow circle engirdling earth
 and sea
 All night the set stars limit, and all
 day
 The moving sun remeasures; ye,
 I say, —

Ye heights of hills, and thou Dircean
 spring
 Inviolable, and ye towers that saw
 cast down
 Seven kings keen-sighted toward you
 seven-faced town,
 And quenched the red seed of one sight-
 less king;

And thou, for death less dreadful
than for birth,
Whose wild leaves hide the horror of
the earth, —

O mountain whereon gods made chase
of kings,
Cithæon, thou that sawest on Pen-
theus dead
Fangs of a mother fasten, and wax
red,
And satiate with a son thy swollen
springs,
And heardst her cry fright all thine
eyries' nests
Who gave death suck at sanguine-
suckling breasts ;

Yea, and a grief more grievous, without
name,
A curse too grievous for the name of
grief,
Thou sawest, and heardst the rumor
scarcely belief
Even unto death and madness, when
the flame
Was lit whose ashes dropped about
the pyre
That of two brethren made one sun,
dering fire ;

O bitter nurse, that on thine hard bare
knees
Rear'dst for his fate the bloody-footed
child
Whose hands should be more blood-
ily defiled
And the old blind feet walk wearier
ways than these,
Whose seed, brought forth in dark-
ness unto doom,
Should break as fire out of his moth-
er's womb ;

I hear you witness as ye bear to me,
Time, day, night, sun, stars, life,
death, air, sea, earth,
And ye that round the human house
of birth
Watch with veiled heads and weaponed
hands, and see

Good things and evil, strengthless yet
and dumb,
Sit in the clouds with cloudlike hours
to come ;

Ye forces without form and viewless
powers
That have the keys of all our years
in hold,
That prophesy too late with tongues
of gold,
In a strange speech whose words are
perished hours,
I witness to you what good things ye
give
As ye to me what evil while I live.

What should I do to blame you, what
to praise,
For floral hours and hours funeral ?
What should I do to curse or bless
at all
For winter-woven or summer-colored
days ?
Curse he that will, and bless you
whoso can :
I have no common part in you with
man.

I hear a springing water, whose quick
sound
Makes softer the soft, sunless, patient
air,
And the wind's hand is laid on my
thin hair
Light as a lover's, and the grasses round
Have odors in them of green bloom
and rain,
Sweet as the kiss wherewith sleep
kisses pain.

I hear the low sound of the spring of
time
Still beating as the low live throb of
blood,
And where its waters gather head and
flood
I hear change moving on them, and the
chime
Across them of reverberate wings of
hours
Sounding, and feel the future air of
flowers.

The wind of change is soft as snow,
and sweet

The sense thereof as roses in the sun,
The faint wind springing with the
springs that run,

The dim sweet smell of flowering hopes,
and heat

Of unbidden sunrise; yet how long
I know not, till the morning put forth
song.

I prophesy of life, who live with death;
Of joy, being sad; of sunlight, who
am blind;

Of man, whose ways are alien from
mankind

And his lips are not parted with man's
breath:

I am a word out of the speechless
years,

The tongue of time, that no man
sleeps who hears.

I stand a shadow across the door of doom
Athwart the lintel of death's house,
and wait;

Nor quick nor dead, nor flexible by
fate,

Nor quite of earth nor wholly of the
tomb;

A voice, a vision, light as fire or air,
Driven between days that shall be
and that were.

I prophesy, with feet upon a grave,
Of death cast out, and life devouring
death

As flame doth wood and stubble with
a breath;

Of freedom, though all manhood were
one slave;

Of truth, though all the world were
liar; of love,

That time nor hate can raze the wit-
ness of.

Life that was given for love's sake and
his law's,

Their powers have no more power
on: they divide

Spoils wrung from lust or wrath of
man or pride,

And keen oblivion without pity or pause

Sets them on fire, and scatters them
on air

Like ashes shaken from a suppliant's
hair.

But life they lay no hand on; life once
given

No force of theirs hath competence
to take;

Life that was given for some divine
thing's sake,

To mix the bitterness of earth with
heaven,

Light with man's night, and music
with his breath,

Dies not, but makes its living food
of death.

I have seen this, who live where men
are not,

In the high starless air of fruitful
night,

On that serenest and obscurest height
Where dead and unborn things are one

in thought,

And whence the live unconquerable
springs

Feed full of force the torrents of new
things.

I have seen this, who saw long since,
being man,

As now I know not if indeed I be,
The fair bare body of Wisdom, good

to see

And evil, whence my light and night
began:

Light on the goal and darkness on the
way,

Light all through night and darkness
all through day.

Mother, that by that Pegasean spring,
Didst fold round in thine arms thy
blinded son,

Weeping, "O holiest, what thing hast
thou done,

What, to my child? woe's me that see
the thing!

Is this thy love to me-ward, and
hereof

Must I take sample how the gods can
love?

"O child, thou hast seen indeed, poor
 child of mine,
 The breasts and flanks of Pallas bare
 in sight,
 But never shalt see more the dear
 sun's light;
 O Helicon, how great a pay is thine
 For some poor antelopes and wild-
 deer dead!
 My child's eyes hast thou taken in
 their stead" —

Mother, thou knewest not what she had
 to give,
 Thy goddess, though then angered,
 for mine eyes;
 Fame and foreknowledge, and to be
 most wise,
 And centuries of high-thoughted life to
 live,
 And in mine hand this guiding staff
 to be
 As eyesight to the feet of men that
 see.

Perchance I shall not die at all, nor
 pass
 The general door and lintel of men
 dead;
 Yet even the very tongue of wisdom
 said
 What grace should come with death to
 Tiresias,
 What special honor that god's hand
 accord
 Who gathers all men's nations as
 their lord.

And sometimes when the secret eye of
 thought
 Is changed with obscurity, and the
 sense
 Aches with long pain of hollow pre-
 science,
 And fiery foresight with fore-suffering
 bought
 Seems even to infect my spirit and
 consume,
 Hunger and thirst come on me for
 the tomb.

I could be fain to drink my death, and
 sleep,
 And no more wrapped about with
 bitter dreams
 Talk with the stars and with the
 winds and streams
 And with the inevitable years, and weep;
 For how should he who communes
 with the years
 Be sometime not a living spring of
 tears?

O child, that guided of thine only will
 Didst set thy maiden foot against the
 gate
 To strike it open ere thine hour of
 fate,
 Antigone, men say not thou didst ill,
 For love's sake and the reverence of
 his awe
 Divinely dying, slain by mortal law;

For love is awful as immortal death.
 And through thee surely hath thy
 brother won
 Rest, out of sight of our world-weary
 sun,
 And in the dead land where ye ghosts
 draw breath
 A royal place and honor; so wast
 thou
 Happy, though earth have hold of
 thee too now

So hast thou life and name inviolable,
 And joy it may be, sacred and severe,
 Joy secret-souled beyond all hope or
 fear,
 A monumental joy wherein to dwell
 Seclude and silent, a selected state,
 Serene possession of thy proper fate.

Thou art not dead as these are dead
 who live
 Full of blind years, a sorrow-shaken
 kind,
 Nor as these are am I the prophet
 blind;
 They have not life that have not heart
 to give
 Life, nor have eyesight who lack
 heart to see
 When to be not is better than to be.

O ye whom time but bears with for a span,
 How long will ye be blind and dead,
 how long
 Make your own souls part of your
 own soul's wrong?
 Son of the word of the most high gods,
 man,
 Why wilt thou make thine hour of
 light and breath
 Emptier of all but shame than very
 death?

Fool, wilt thou live for ever? though
 thou care
 With all thine heart for life to keep
 it fast,
 Shall not thine hand forego it at the
 last?
 Lo, thy sure hour shall take thee by the
 hair
 Sleeping, or when thou knowest not,
 or wouldst fly;
 And as men died much mightier, shalt
 thou die.

Yea, they are dead, men much more
 worth than thou,
 The savor of heroic lives that were,
 Is it not mixed into thy common air?
 The sense of them is shed about thee
 now.
 Feel not thy brows a wind blowing
 from far?
 Aches not thy forehead with a future
 star?

The light that thou may'st make out of
 thy name
 Is in the wind of this same hour that
 drives,
 Blown within reach but once of all
 men's lives;
 And he that puts forth hand upon the
 flame
 Shall have it for a garland on his head
 To sign him for a king among the
 dead.

But these men that the lessening years
 behold,
 Who sit the most part without flame
 or crown,

And brawl and sleep, and wear their
 life-days down
 With joys and griefs ignobler than o
 old,
 And care not if the better day shal
 be,—
 Are these or art thou dead, Antigone?

PART II.

As when one wakes out of a waning
 dream,
 And sees with instant eyes the naked
 thought
 Whereof the vision as a web was
 wrought,
 I saw beneath a heaven of cloud and
 gleam,
 Ere yet the heart of the young sun
 waxed brave,
 One like a prophet standing by a
 grave.

In the hoar heaven was hardly beam o
 breath,
 And all the colored hills and fields
 were gray,
 And the wind wandered seeking fo
 the day,
 And wailed as though he had found he
 done to death,
 And this gray hour had built to bur
 her
 The hollow twilight for a sepulchre.

But in my soul I saw as in a glass
 A pale and living body full of grace
 There lying, and over it the prophet'
 face
 Fixed; and the face was not of Tiresias
 For such a starry fire was in his eye
 As though their light it was that mad
 the skies.

Such eyes should God's have been when
 very love
 Looked forth of them and set the sun
 aflame,
 And such his lips that called the ligh
 by name
 And bade the morning forth at soun
 thereof;

His face was sad and masterful as
fare,
And like a star's his look compas-
sionate.

Like a star's gazed on of sad eyes so
long
It seems to yearn with pity, and all
its fire
As a man's heart to tremble with
desire
And heave as though the light would
bring forth song;
Yet from his face flashed lightning on
the land,
And like the thunder-bearer's was his
hand.

The steepness of strange stairs had
tired his feet,
And his lips yet seemed sick of that
salt bread
Wherewith the lips of banishment
are fed;
But nothing was there in the world so
sweet
As the most bitter love, like God's
own grace,
Wherewith he gazed on that fair
buried face.

Grief and glad pride and passion and
sharp shame,
Wrath and remembrance, faith and
hope and hate,
And pitiless pity of days degenerate,
Were in his eyes as an incorporate
flame
That burned about her, and the heart
thereof
And central flower was very fire of
love.

But all about her grave wherein she
slept
Were noises of the wild wind-footed
years
Whose footprints flying were full of
blood and tears,
Shrieks as of Mænads on their hills
that leapt

And yelled as beasts of ravin, and
their meat
Was the rent flesh of their own sons
to eat

And fiery shadows passing with strange
cries,
And sphinx-like shapes about the
ruined lands,
And the red reek of parricidal hands
And intermixture of incestuous eyes,
And light as of that self-divided flame
Which made an end of the Cadmean
name.

And I beheld again, and lo the grave,
And the bright body laid therein as
dead,
And the same shadow across another
head
That bowed down silent on that sleep-
ing slave
Who was the lady of empire from
her birth
And light of all the kingdoms of the
earth.

Within the compass of the watcher's
hand
All strengths of other men and divers
powers
Were held at ease and gathered up
as flowers;
His heart was as the heart of his whole
land,
And at his feet as natural servants
lay
Twilight and dawn and night and
laboring day

He was most awful of the sons of God.
Even now men seeing seemed at his
lips to see
The trumpet of the judgment that
should be,
And in his right hand terror for a rod,
And in the breath that made the
mountains bow
The horned fire of Moses on his
brow.

The strong wind of the coming of the
 Lord
 Had blown as flame upon him, and
 brought down
 On his bare head from heaven fire
 for a crown,
 And fire was girt upon him as a sword
 To smite and lighten, and on what
 ways he trod
 There fell from him the shadow of a
 god.

Pale, with the whole world's judgment
 in his eyes,
 He stood and saw the grief and shame
 endure
 That he, though highest of angels,
 might not cure,
 And the same sins done under the same
 skies,
 And the same slaves to the same
 tyrants thrown,
 And fain he would have slept, and
 fain been stone.

But with unslumbering eyes he watched
 the sleep
 That sealed her sense whose eyes
 were suns of old;
 And the night shut and opened, and
 behold,
 The same grave where those prophets
 came to weep,
 But she that lay therein had moved
 and stirred,
 And where those twain had watched
 her stood a third.

The tripled rhyme that closed in Para-
 dise
 With Love's name sealing up its
 starry speech;
 The tripled might of hand that found
 in reach
 All crowns beheld far off of all men's
 eyes,
 Song, color, carven wonders of live
 stone,—
 These were not, but the very soul
 alone.

The living spirit, the good gift of grace,
 The faith which takes of its own
 blood to give
 That the dead veins of buried hope
 may live,
 Came on her sleeping, face to naked
 face,
 And from a soul more sweet than all
 the south
 Breathed love upon her sealed and
 breathless mouth.

Between her lips the breath was blown
 as fire,
 And through her flushed veins leapt
 the liquid life,
 And with sore passion and ambigu-
 ous strife
 The new birth rent her and the new
 desire,
 The will to live, the competence to
 be,
 The sense to hearken, and the soul
 to see

And the third prophet standing by her
 grave
 Stretched forth his hand, and touched
 her; and her eyes
 Opened as sudden suns in heaven
 might rise,
 And her soul caught from his the faith
 to save;
 Faith above creeds, faith beyond
 records, born
 Of the pure, naked, fruitful, awful
 morn.

For in the daybreak now that night was
 dead
 The light, the shadow, the delight,
 the pain,
 The purpose and the passion of those
 twain,
 Seemed gathered on that third prophetic
 head;
 And all their crowns were as one
 crown, and one
 His face with her face in the living
 sun.

For even with that communion of their
eyes

His whole soul passed into her, and
made her strong;

And all the sounds and shows of
shame and wrong,

The hand that slays, the lip that mocks
and lies,

Temples and thrones that yet men
seem to see, —

Are these dead, or art thou dead,
Italy?

AN APPEAL.

I.

ART thou indeed among these,
Thou of the tyrannous crew,
The kingdoms fed upon blood,
O queen from of old of the seas,
England, — art thou of them too
That drink of the poisonous flood,
That hide under poisonous trees?

II.

Nay, thy name from of old,
Mother, was pure, or we dreamed;
Purer we held thee than this,
Purer fain would we hold;
So goodly a glory it seemed,
A fame so bounteous of bliss,
So more precious than gold.

III.

A praise so sweet in our ears,
That thou in the tempest of things
As a rock for a refuge shouldst stand,
In the blood-red river of tears
Poured forth for the triumph of kings;
A safeguard, a sheltering land,
In the thunder and torrent of years.

IV.

Strangers came gladly to thee,
Exiles, chosen of men,
Safe for thy sake in thy shade,
Sat down at thy feet and were free.
So men spake of thee then:
Now shall their speaking be stayed?
Ah, so let it not be!

V.

Not for revenge or affright,
Pride, or a tyrannous lust,
Cast from thee the crown of thy praise.
Mercy was thine in thy might;
Strong when thou wert, thou wert just;
Now, in the wrong-doing days,
Cleave thou, thou at least, to the right.

VI.

How should one charge thee, how
sway,
Save by the memories that were?
Not thy gold, nor the strength of thy
ships,
Nor the might of thine armies at bay,
Made thee, mother, most fair;
But a word from republican lips
Said in thy name, in thy day.

VII.

Hast thou said it, and hast thou forgot?
Is thy praise in thine ears as a scoff?
Blood of men guiltless was shed,
Children, and souls without spot,
Shed, but in places far off:
Let slaughter no more be, said
Milton; and slaughter was not.

VIII.

Was it not said of thee too,
Now, but now, by thy foes,
By the slaves that had slain their
France,
And thee would slay as they slew —
“Down with her walls that enclose
Freemen that eye us askance,
Fugitives, men that are true!”

IX.

This was thy praise or thy blame,
From bondsman or freeman, — to be
Pure from pollution of slaves,
Clean of their sins, and thy name
Bloodless, innocent, free:
Now if thou be not, thy waves
Wash not from off thee thy shame.

X.

Freeman he is not, but slave,
Whoso in fear for the state
Cries for surety of blood,
Help of gibbet and grave;
Neither is any land great
Whom, in her fear-stricken mood,
These things only can save.

XI.

Lo! how fair from afar,
Taintless of tyranny, stands
Thy mighty daughter, for years
Who trod the winepress of war,—
Shines with immaculate hands;
Slays not a foe, neither fears;
Stains not peace with a scar.

XII.

Be not as tyrant or slave,
England; be not as these,
Thou that wert other than they.
Stretch out thine hand, but to save;
Put forth thy strength, and release:
Lest there arise, if thou slay,
Thy shame as a ghost from the grave.
Nov. 20, 1867.

PERINDE AC CADAVER.

In a vision Liberty stood
By the childless charm-stricken bed
Where, barren of glory and good,
Knowing naught if she would not or
would,
England slept with her dead.

Her face that the foam had whitened,
Her hands that were strong to strive,
Her eyes whence battle had lightened,
Over all was a drawn shroud tightened
To bind her asleep and alive.

She turned and laughed in her dream,
With gray lips arid and cold:
She saw not the face as a beam
Burn on her, but only a gleam
Through her sleep as of new-stamped
gold.

But the goddess, with terrible tears
In the light of her down-drawn eyes,
Spake fire in the dull sealed ears:
"Thou, sick with slumbers and fears,
Wilt thou sleep now indeed, or arise?"

"With dreams, and with words, and
with light
Memories and empty desires,
Thou hast wrapped thyself round all
night:
Thou hast shut up thine heart from the
right,
And warmed thee at burnt-out fires.

"Yet once, if I smote at thy gate,
Thy sons would sleep not, but heard:
O thou that wast found so great,
Art thou smitten with folly or fate,
That thy sons have forgotten my
word?"

"O Cromwell's mother, O breast
That suckled Milton! thy name
That was beautiful then, that was blest,
Is it wholly disowned and deprest,
Trodden under by sloth into shame?"

"Why wilt thou hate me and die?
For none can hate me and live.
What ill have I done to thee? why
Wilt thou turn from me fighting, and
fly,
Who would follow thy feet and for-
give?"

"Thou hast seen me stricken, and said,
What is it to me? I am strong:
Thou hast seen me bowed down on my
dead,
And laughed, and lifted thine head,
And washed thine hands of my
wrong.

"Thou has put out the soul of thy
sight:
Thou hast sought to my foemen as
friend,
To my traitors that kiss me and smite,
To the kingdoms and empires of
night
That begin with the darkness, and
end.

"Turn thee, awaken, arise,
 With the light that is risen on the
 lands,
 With the change of the fresh-colored
 skies :
 Set thine eyes on mine eyes,
 Lay thy hands in my hands."

She moved and mourned as she heard,
 Sighed, and shifted her place,
 As the wells of her slumber were
 stirred
 By the music and wind of the word,
 Then turned, and covered her face.

"Ah!" she said in her sleep,
 "Is my work not done with, and
 done?
 Is there corn for my sickle to reap?
 And strange is the pathway, and steep,
 And sharp overhead is the sun.

"I have done thee service enough,
 Loved thee enough in my day :
 Now nor hatred nor love
 Nor hardly remembrance thereof
 Lives in me to lighten my way.

"And is it not well with us here?
 Is change as good as is rest?
 What hope should move me, or fear
 That eye should open or ear,
 Who have long since won what is
 best?

"Where among us are such things;
 As turn men's hearts into hell?
 Have we not queens without stings,
 Scotched princes, and fangless kings?
 Yea," she said, "we are well.

"We have filed the teeth of the snake
 Monarchy : how should it bite?
 Should the slippery slow thing wake,
 It will not sting for my sake ;
 Yea," she said, "I do right."

So spake she, drunken with dreams,
 Mad; but again in her ears
 A voice as of storm-swelled streams
 Spake : "No brave shame then redeem's
 Thy lusts of sloth and thy fears?

"Thy poor lie slain of thine hands,
 Their starved limbs rot in thy sight ;
 As a shadow the ghost of thee stands
 Among men living and lands,
 And stirs not leftward or right.

"Freeman he is not, but slave,
 Who stands not out on my side ;
 His own hand hollows his grave,
 Nor strength is in me to save
 Where strength is none to abide.

"Time shall tread on his name
 That was written for honor of old,
 Who hath taken in change for fame
 Dust, and silver, and shame,
 Ashes, and iron, and gold."

THE OBLATION.

ASK nothing more of me, sweet :
 All I can give you, I give.
 Heart of my heart, were it more,
 More would be laid at your feet ;
 Love that should help you to live;
 Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give,
 Once to have sense of you more,
 Touch you and taste of you sweet,
 Think you and breathe you, and live,
 Swept of your wings as they soar,
 Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more
 Give you but love of you, sweet :
 He that hath more, let him give ;
 He that hath wings, let him soar ;
 Mine is the heart at your feet
 Here, that must love you to live.

A SONG OF ITALY.

UPON a windy night of stars that fell
 At the wind's spoken spell,
 Swept with sharp strokes of agonizing
 light
 From the clear gulf of night,
 Between the fixed and fallen glories
 one
 Against my vision shone,

More fair and fearful and divine than they

That measure night and day,
And worthier worship; and within mine eyes

The formless folded skies
Took shape and were unfolded like as flowers.

And I beheld the hours
As maidens, and the days as laboring men,

And the soft nights again
As wearied women to their own souls wed,

And ages as the dead.
And over these living, and them that died,

From one to the other side
A lordlier light than comes of earth or air

Made the world's future fair.
A woman like to love in face, but not
A thing of transient lot;

And like to hope, but having hold on truth;

And like to joy or youth,
Save that upon the rock her feet were set;

And like what men forget,
Faith, innocence, high thought, laborious peace,—

And yet like none of these,
Being not as these are mortal, but with eyes

That sounded the deep skies,
And clove like wings or arrows their clear way

Through night and dawn and day,—
So fair a presence over star and sun
Stood, making these as one.

For in the shadow of her shape were all
Darkened and held in thrall,
So mightier rose she past them; and
I felt

Whose form, whose likeness knelt
With covered hair and face, and clasped her knees;

And knew the first of these
Was Freedom, and the second Italy
And what sad words said she

For mine own grief I knew not, nor had heart
Therewith to bear my part

And set my songs to sorrow; nor to hear

How tear by sacred tear
Fell from her eyes as flowers or notes that fall

In some slain feaster's hall
Where in mid music and melodious breath

Men singing have seen death.
So fair, so lost, so sweet, she knelt; or so

In our lost eyes below
Seemed to us sorrowing; and her speech being said,

Fell, as one who falls dead.
And for a little she too wept, who stood
Above the dust and blood

And thrones and troubles of the world;
then spake,
As who bids dead men wake:—

“Because the years were heavy on thy head;

Because dead things are dead;
Because thy chosen on hillside, city and plain

Are shed as drops of rain;
Because all earth was black, all heaven was blind,

And we cast out of mind;
Because men wept, saying *Freedom*, knowing of thee,

Child, that thou wast not free:
Because wherever blood was not shame was

Where thy pure foot did pass;
Because on Promethean rocks distant
Thee fouler eagles rent;

Because a serpent stains with slime and foam
This that is not thy Rome;

Child of my womb, whose limbs were made in me,

Have I forgotten thee?
In all thy dreams through all these years on wing,

Hast thou dreamed such a thing?
The mortal mother-bird out-soars her nest,

The child outgrows the breast;
But suns as stars shall fall from heaven and cease,
Ere we twain be as these;

Yea, utmost skies forget their utmost
sun,

Ere we twain be not one.

My lesser jewels sewn on skirt and hem,
I have no heed of them

Obscured and flawed by sloth or craft
or power;

But thou, that wast my flower,
The blossom bound between my brows,
and worn

In sight of even and morn
From the last ember of the flameless
west

To the dawn's baring breast —

I were not Freedom if thou wert not
free,

Nor thou wert Italy.

O mystic rose ingrained with blood,
impearled

With tears of all the world!

The torpor of their blind brute-ridden
trance

Kills England and chills France;
And Spain sobs hard through stran-
gling blood; and snows

Hide the huge eastern woes.

But thou, twin-born with morning,
nursed of noon,

And blessed of star and moon!

What shall avail to assail thee any more,
From sacred shore to shore?

Have Time and Love not knelt down
at thy feet,

Thy sore, thy soiled, thy sweet,
Fresh from the flints and mire of mur-
derous ways

And dust of travelling days?

Hath Time not kissed them, Love not
washed them fair,

And wiped with tears and hair?

Though God forget thee, I will not for-
get;

Though heaven and earth be set
Against thee, O unconquerable child,
Abused, abased, reviled,

Lift thou not less from no funereal bed
Thine undishonored head;

Love thou not less, by lips of thine once
prest,

This my now barren breast;
Seek thou not less, being well assured
thereof,

O child, my latest love.

For now the barren bosom shall bear
fruit,

Songs leap from lips long mute,
And with my milk the mouths of nations
fed

Again be glad and red
That were worn white with hunger and
sorrow and thirst;

And thou, most fair and first,
Thou whose warm hands and sweet live
lips I feel

Upon me for a seal,
Thou whose least looks, whose smiles
and little sighs,

Whose passionate pure eyes,
Whose dear fair limbs that neither
bonds could bruise

Nor hate of men misuse,
Whose flower-like breath and bosom,
O my child,

O mine and undefiled,
Fill with such tears as burn like bitter
wine

These mother's eyes of mine,
Thrill with huge passions and primeval
pains

The fulness of my veins.
O sweetest head seen higher than any
stands,

I touch thee with mine hands,
I lay my lips upon thee, O thou most
sweet,

To lift thee on thy feet,
And with the fire of mine to fill thine
eyes;

I say unto thee, Arise."

She ceased, and heaven was full of flame
and sound,

And earth's old limbs unbound
Shone and waxed warm with fiery dew
and seed

Shed through her at this her need:
And highest in heaven, a mother and
full of grace,

With no more covered face,
With no more lifted hands and bended
knees,

Rose, as from sacred seas
Love, when old time was full of plente-
ous springs,

That fairest-born of things,

The land that holds the rest in tender
thrall

For love's sake in them all,
That binds with words and holds with
eyes and hands

All hearts in all men's lands.
So died the dream whence rose the live
desire

That here takes form and fire,
A spirit from the splendid grave of sleep
Risen, that ye should not weep, —
Should not weep more nor ever, O ye
that hear,

And ever have held her dear,
Seeing now indeed she weeps not who
wept sore,

And sleeps not any more.
Hearken ye towards her, O people,
exalt your eyes;

Is this a thing that dies?

Italia! by the passion of the pain
That bent and rent thy chain;

Italia! by the breaking of the bands,
The shaking of the lands;

Beloved, O men's mother, O men's
queen,

Arise, appear, be seen!
Arise, array thyself in manifold

Queen's raiment of wrought gold;
With girdles of green freedom, and
with red

Roses, and white snow shed
Above the flush and frondage of the
hills

That all thy deep dawn fills
And all thy clear night veils and warms
with wings

Spread till the morning sings;
The rose of resurrection, and the bright
Breast lavish of the light,

The lady lily like the snowy sky
Ere the stars wholly die;
As red as blood, and whiter than a
wave,

Flowers grown as from thy grave,
From the green fruitful grass in May-
time hot,

Thy grave, where thou art not.
Gather the grass and weave, in sacred
sign

Of the ancient earth divine,

The holy heart of things, the seed of
birth,

The mystical warm earth.
O thou her flower of flowers, with treble
braid

Be thy sweet head arrayed,
In witness of her mighty motherhood
Who bore thee and found thee
good,

Her fairest-born of children, on whose
head

Her green and white and red
Are hope and light and life, inviolate
Of any latter fate.

Fly, O our flag, through deep Italian
air,

Above the flags that were,
The dusty shreds of shameful battle-
flags

Trampled and rent in rags,
As withering woods in autumn's bitter-
est breath

Yellow, and black as death;
Black as crushed worms that sicken in
the sense,

And yellow as pestilence.
Fly, green as summer and red as dawn
and white

As the live heart of light,
The blind bright womb of color unborn,
that brings

Forth all fair forms of things,
As freedom all fair forms of nations
died

In divers-colored pride.
Fly fleet as wind on every wind that
blows

Between her seas and snows,
From Alpine white, from Tuscan green,
and where

Vesuvius reddens air.
Fly! and let all men see it, and all kings
wait,

And priests wax faint and pale,
And the cold hordes that moan in misty
places

And the funereal races
And the sick serfs of lands that wait
and wane

See thee and hate thee in vain.
In the clear laughter of all winds and
waves,

In the blown grass of graves,

In the long sound of fluctuant boughs
of trees,

In the broad breath of seas,
Bid the sound of thy flying folds be
heard;

And as a spoken word
Full of that fair god and that merciless
Who rends the Pythoness,
So be the sound and so the fire that
saith

She feels her ancient breath
And the old blood move in her im-
mortal veins.

Strange travail and strong pains,
Our mother, hast thou borne these many
years

While thy pure blood and tears
Mixed with the Tyrrhene and the Adrian
sea.

Light things were said of thee,
As of one buried deep among the dead;
Yea, she hath been, they said,
She was when time was younger, and is
not;

The very cerecloths rot
That flutter in the dusty wind of death,
Not moving with her breath;
Far seasons and forgotten years enfold
Her dead corpse old and cold
With many windy winters and pale
springs:

She is none of this world's things.
Though her dead head like a live gar-
land wear

The golden-growing hair
That flows over her breast down to her
feet,

Dead queens, whose life was sweet
In sight of all men living, have been
found

So cold, so clad, so crowned,
With all things faded and with one
thing fair,

Their old immortal hair,
When flesh and bone turned dust at
touch of day:

And she is dead as they.

So men said sadly, mocking; so the
slave,

Whose life was his soul's grave;

So, pale or red with change of fast and
feast,

The sanguine-sandalled priest;
So the Austrian, when his fortune came
to flood,

And the warm wave was blood;
With wings that widened and with beak
that smote,

So shrieked through either throat
From the hot horror of its northern
nest

That double-headed pest;
So, triple-crowned with fear and fraud
and shame,

He of whom treason came,
The herdsman of the Gadarean swine;
So all his ravening kine,

Made fat with poisonous pasture: so
not we,

Mother, beholding thee.
Make answer, O the crown of all our
slain,

Ye that were one, being twain,
Twain brethren, twin-born to the sec-
ond birth,

Chosen out of all our earth
To be the prophesying stars that
say

How hard is night on day,
Stars in serene and sudden heaven re-
risen

Before the sun break prison
And ere the moon be wasted; fair first
flowers

In that red wreath of ours
Woven with the lives of all whose lives
were shed

To crown their mother's head
With leaves of civic cypress and thick
yew,

Till the olive bind it too,
Olive and laurel and all loftier leaves
That victory wears or weaves

At her fair feet for her beloved brow;

Hear, for she too hears now,

O Pisacane, from Calabrian sands;

O all heroic hands

Close on the sword-hilt, hands of all
her dead;

O many a holy head,
Bowed for her sake even to her reddening
dust;

O chosen, O pure and just,

Who counted for a small thing life's
estate,

And died, and made it great;
Ye whose names mix with all her
memories; ye

Who rather chose to see
Death, than our more intolerable things;

Thou whose name withers kings,
Agesilao; thou too, O chieftiest thou,

The slayer of splendid brow,
Laid where the lying lips of fear deride

The foiled tyrannicide,
Foiled, fallen, slain, scorned, and happy;

being in fame,
Felice, like thy name,

Not like thy fortune; father of the fight,
Having in hand our light.

Ah, happy! for that sudden-swerving
hand

Flung light on all thy land,
Yea, lit blind France with compulsory

ray,
Driven down a righteous way;

Ah, happiest! for from thee the wars
began,

From thee the fresh springs ran;
From thee the lady land that queens

the earth
Gat as she gave new birth.

O sweet mute mouths, O all fair dead
of ours,

Fair in her eyes as flowers,
Fair without feature, vocal without

voice,
Strong without strength, rejoice!

Hear it with ears that hear not, and on
eyes

That see not let it rise,
Rise as a sundawn; be it as dew that

drips
On dumb and dusty lips;

Eyes have ye not, and see it; neither
ears,

And there is none but hears.
This is the same for whom ye bled and

wept;
She was not dead, but slept.

This is that very Italy which was
And is and shall not pass.

But thou, though all were not well done,
O chief,

Must thou take shame or grief?

Because one man is not as thou or ten,
Must thou take shame for men?

Because the supreme sunrise is not yet,
Is the young dew not wet?

Wilt thou not yet abide a little while,
Soul without fear or guile,

Mazzini, — O our prophet, O our priest,
A little while at least?

A little hour of doubt and of control,
Sustain thy sacred soul;

Withhold thine heart, our father, but
an hour;

Is it not here, the flower,
Is it not blown and fragrant from the

root,
And shall not be the fruit?

Thy children, even thy people thou hast
made,

Thine, with thy words arrayed,
Clothed with thy thoughts and girt with

thy desires,
Yearn up toward thee as fires.

Art thou not father, O father, of all
these?

From thine own Genoese
To where of nights the lower extreme

lagune
Feels its Venetian moon,

Nor suckling's mouth nor mother's
breast set free

But hath that grace through thee.
The milk of life on death's unnatural

brink
Thou gavest them to drink,

The natural milk of freedom; and again
They drank, and they were men.

The wine and honey of freedom and of
faith

They drank, and cast off death.
Bear with them now; thou art holier.

yet endure,
Till they as thou be pure.

Their swords at least that stemmed half
Austria's tide

Bade all its bulk divide;
Else, though fate bade them for a

breath's space fall,
She had not fallen at all.

Not by their hands they made time's
promise true;

Not by their hands, but through.
Nor on Custoza ran their blood to waste,

Nor fell their fame defaced

Whom stormiest Adria with tumultuous
tides

Whirls undersea and hides.

Not his, who from the sudden-settling
deck

Looked over death and wreck
To where the mother's bosom shone,
who smiled

As he, so dying, her child;
For he smiled surely, dying, to mix his
death

With her memorial breath;
Smiled, being most sure of her, that in
no wise,

Die whoso will, she dies:
And she smiled surely, fair and far
above,

Wept not, but smiled for love.
Thou too, O splendour of the sudden
sword

That drove the crews abhorred
From Naples and the siren-footed
strand,

Flash from thy master's hand,
Shine from the middle summer of the
seas

To the old Æolides,
Outshine their fiery fumes of burning
night,

Sword, with thy midday light;
Flame as a beacon from the Tyrrhene
foam

To the rent heart of Rome,
From the island of her lover and thy
lord,

Her savior and her sword.
In the fierce year of failure and of fame,
Art thou not yet the same

That wast as lightning swifter than all
wings

In the blind face of kings?
When priests took counsel to devise
despair,

And princes to forswear,
She clasped thee, O her sword and flag-
bearer

And staff and shield to her,
O Garibaldi! need was hers and grief,
Of thee and of the chief,

And of another girt in arms to stand
As good of hope and hand,
As high of soul and happy, albeit indeed
The heart should burn and bleed,

So but the spirit shake not nor the
breast

Swerve, but abide its rest,
As theirs did and as thine, though ruin
clomb

The highest wall of Rome,
Though treason stained and spilt her
lustral water,

And slaves led slaves to slaughter,
And priests, praying and slaying,
watched them pass

From a strange France, alas!
That was not freedom; yet when these
were past

Thy sword and thou stood fast,
Till new men seeing thee where Sicilian
waves

Hear now no sound of slaves,
And where thy sacred blood is fragrant
- still

Upon the Bitter Hill,
Seeing by that blood one country saved
and stained,

Less loved thee crowned than chained.
And less now only than the chief: for
he,

Father of Italy,
Upbore in holy hands the babe new-
born

Through loss and sorrow and scorn,
Of no man led, of many men reviled;
Till, lo! the new-born child

Gone from between his hands, and in its
place,

Lo; the fair mother's face.
Blessed is he of all men, being in one
As father to her and son,

Blessed of all men living, that he found
Her weak limbs bared and bound,
And in his arms and in his bosom bore.

And as a garment wore
Her weight of want, and as a royal
dress

Put on her weariness.
As in faith's hoariest histories men
read,

The strong man bore at need
Through roaring rapids when all heaven
was wild

The likeness of a child
That still waxed greater and heavier as
he trod,
And altered, and was God.

Praise him, O winds that move the
 molten air,
 O light of days that were,
 And light of days that shall be; land
 and sea,
 And heaven and Italy:
 Praise him, O storm and summer, shore
 and wave,
 O skies and every grave;
 O weeping hopes, O memories beyond
 tears,
 O many and murmuring years,
 O sounds far off in time and visions
 far,
 O sorrow with thy star,
 And joy with all thy beacons; ye that
 mourn,
 And ye whose light is born;
 O fallen faces, and O souls arisen,
 Praise him from tomb and prison,
 Praise him from heaven and sunlight;
 and ye floods,
 And windy waves of woods;
 Ye valleys and wild vineyards, ye lit
 lakes
 And happier hillside brakes,
 Untrampled by the accursed feet that
 trod
 Fields golden from their god,
 Fields of their god forsaken, whereof
 none
 Sees his face in the sun,
 Hears his voice from the floweriest
 wildernesses;
 And, barren of his tresses,
 Ye bays unplucked and laurels unin-
 twined,
 That no men break or bind,
 And myrtles long forgetful of the
 sword,
 And olives unadored,
 Wisdom and love, white hands that save
 and slay,
 Praise him; and ye as they,
 Praise him, O gracious might of dews
 and rains
 That feed the purple plains,
 O sacred sunbeams bright as bare steel
 drawn,
 O cloud and fire and dawn;
 Red hills of flame, white Alps, green
 Apennines,
 Banners of blowing pines,

Standards of stormy snows, flags of light
 leaves,
 Three wherewith Freedom weaves
 One ensign that once woven and once
 unfurled
 Makes day of all a world,
 Makes blind their eyes who knew not
 and outbraves
 The waste of iron waves;
 Ye fields of yellow fulness, ye fresh
 fountains,
 And mists or many mountains;
 Ye moons and seasons, and ye days
 and nights;
 Ye starry-headed heights,
 And gorges melting sunward from the
 snow,
 And all strong streams that flow,
 Tender as tears, and fair as faith, and
 pure
 As hearts made sad and sure
 At once by many sufferings and one love
 O mystic deathless dove
 Held to the heart of earth and in her
 hands
 Cherished, O lily of lands,
 White rose of time, dear dream of
 praises past, —
 For such as these thou wast,
 That art as eagles setting to the sun,
 As fawns that leap and run,
 As a sword carven with keen floral gold
 Sword for an armed god's hold,
 Flower for a crowned god's forehead, —
 O our land,
 Reach forth thine holiest hand,
 O mother of many sons and memories,
 Stretch out thine hand to his
 That raised and gave thee life to run
 and leap
 When thou wast full of sleep,
 That touched and stung thee with young
 blood and breath
 When thou wast hard on death.
 Praise him, O all her cities and her
 crowns,
 Her towers and thrones of towns;
 O noblest Brescia, scarred from foot to
 head
 And breast-deep in the dead,
 Praise him from all the glories of thy
 graves
 That yellow Mela laves

With gentle and golden water, whose
fair flood

Ran wider with thy blood :
Praise him, O born of that heroic breast,
O nursed thereat and blest,
Verona, fairer than thy mother fair,
But not more brave to bear :
Praise him, O Milan, whose imperial
tread

Bruised once the German head ;
Whose might, by northern swords left
desolate,

Set foot on fear and fate :
Praise him, O long mute mouth of
melodies,

Mantua, with louder keys,
With mightier chords of music even
than rolled

From the large harps of old,
When thy sweet singer of golden throat
and tongue,

Praising his tyrant, sung ;
Though now thou sing not as of other
days,

Learn late a better praise.
Not with the sick sweet lips of slaves
that sing,

Praise thou no priest or king,
No brow-bound laurel of discolored leaf,
But him, the crownless chief.

Praise him, O star of sun-forgotten
times,

Among their creeds and crimes
That wast a fire of witness in the night,
Padua, the wise men's light :

Praise him, O sacred Venice, and the
sea

That now exults through thee,
Full of the mighty morning and the
sun,

Free of things dead and done ;
Praise him from all the years of thy
great grief,

That shook thee like a leaf
With winds and snows of torment, rain
that fell

Red as the rains of hell,
Storms of black thunder and of yellow
flame,

And all ill things but shame ;
Praise him with all thy holy heart and
strength ;

Through thy walls' breadth and length

Praise him with all thy people, that their
voice

Bid the strong soul rejoice,
The fair clear supreme spirit beyond
stain,

Pure as the depth of pain,
High as the head of suffering, and se-
cure

As all things that endure.
More than thy blind lord of an hundred
years

Whose name our memory hears,
Home-bound from harbors of the By-
zantine

Made tributary of thine,
Praise him who gave no gifts from over-
sea,

But gave thyself to thee.
O mother Genoa, through all years that
run,

More than that other son,
Who first beyond the seals of sunset
prest

Even to the unfooted west,
Whose back-blown flag scared from
their sheltering seas

The unknown Atlantides,
And as flame climbs through cloud and
vapor clomb

Through streams of storm and foam,
Till half in sight they saw land heave
and swim, —

More than this man praise him.
One found a world new-born from virgin
sea ;

And one found Italy.
O heavenliest Florence, from the mouths
of flowers

Fed by melodious hours,
From each sweet mouth that kisses
light and air,

Thou whom thy fate made fair,
As a bound vine or any flowering tree,
Praise him who made thee free.

For no grape-gatherers trampling out
the wine

Tread thee, the fairest vine ;
For no man binds thee, no man bruises,
none

Does with thee as these have done.
From where spring hears loud through
her long lit vales

Triumphant nightingales,

In many a fold of fiery foliage hid
den,

Withheld as things forbidden,
But clamorous with innumerable de-
light

In May's red, green, and white,
In the far-floated standard of the spring,
That bids men also sing,
Our flower of flags, our witness that we
are free,

Our lamp for land and sea;
From where Majano feels through corn
and vine,

Spring move and melt as wine,
And Fiesole's embracing arms enclose
The immeasurable rose;
From hillsides plumed with pine, and
heights wind-worn

That feel the reflux morn,
Or where the moon's face warm and
passionate

Burns, and men's hearts grow great,
And the swoln eyelids labor with sweet
tears,

And in their burning ears
Sound throbs like flame, and in their
eyes new light

Kindles the trembling night;
From faint illumined fields and starry
valleys

Wherefrom the hill-wind sallies,
From Vallombrosa, from Valdarno raise
One Tuscan tune of praise.

O lordly city of the field of death,
Praise him with equal breath,
From sleeping streets and gardens, and
the stream

That threads them as a dream
Threads without light the untravelled
ways of sleep

With eyes that smile or weep;
From the sweet sombre beauty of wave
and wall

That fades and does not fall;
From colored domes and cloisters fair
with fame,

Praise thou and thine his name.
Thou too, O little laurelled town of
towers,

Clothed with the flame of flowers,
From windy ramparts girdled with
young gold,
From thy sweet hillside fold

Of wallflowers and the acacia's belted
bloom

And every blowing plume,
Halls that saw Dante speaking, chapel
fair

As the outer hills and air,
Praise him who feeds the fire that Dante
fed,

Our highest heroic head,
Whose eyes behold through floated
cloud and flame

The maiden face of fame
Like April's in Valdelsa; fair as flowers
And patient as the hours;

Sad with slow sense of time, and bright
with faith

That levels life and death;
The final fame, that with a foot sub-
lime

Treads down reluctant time;
The fame that waits and watches and i-
wise,

A virgin with chaste eyes,
A goddess who takes hands with great
men's grief;

Praise her, and him, our chief.
Praise him, O Siena, and thou her deep
green spring,

O Fonte Branda, sing:
Shout from the red clefts of thy fiery
crag,

Shake out thy flying flags
In the long wind that streams from hill
to hill;

Bid thy full music fill
The desolate red waste of sunset air
And fields the old time saw fair,

But now the hours ring void through
ruined lands,

Wild work of mortal hands;
Yet through thy dead Maremma let his
name

Take flight and pass in flame,
And the red ruin of disastrous hours
Shall quicken into flowers.

Praise him, O fiery child of sun and sea
Naples, who bade thee be;
For till he sent the swords that scourge
and save,

Thou wast not, but thy grave.
But more than all these praise him and
give thanks,

Thou, from thy Tiber's banks,

From all thine hills and from thy supreme dome, —

Praise him, O risen Rome!
Let all thy children cities at thy knee
Lift up their voice with thee,
Saying, "For thy love's sake and our
perished grief

We laud thee, O our chief!"
Saying, "For thine hand and help when
hope was dead

We thank thee, O our head!"
Saying, "For thy voice and face within
our sight

We bless thee, O our light;
For waters cleansing us from days de-
filed

We praise thee, O our child!"

So with an hundred cities' mouths in
one

Praising thy supreme son,
Son of thy sorrow, O mother, O maid
and mother,

Our 'queen, who serve none other,
Our lady of pity and mercy, and full of
grace,

Turn otherwhere thy face,
Turn for a little and look what things
are these

Now fallen before thy knees;
Turn upon them thine eyes who hated
thee,

Behold what things they be,
Italia: these are stubble that were
steel,

Dust, or a turning wheel;
As leaves, as snow, as sand, that were
so strong;

And howl, for all their song,
And wail, for all their wisdom; they
that were

So great, they are all stript bare;
They are all made empty of beauty, and
all abhorred,

They are shivered, and 'heir sword;
They are slain who slew, they are heart-
less who were wise,

Yea, turn on these thine eyes,
O thou, soliciting with soul sublime
The obscure soul of time,

Thou, with the wounds thy holy body
bears

From broken swords of theirs,

Thou, with the sweet swoln eyelids that
have bled

Tears for thy thousands dead,
And upon these, whose swords drank
up like dew

The sons of thine they slew,
These, whose each gun blasted with
murdering mouth

Live flowers of thy fair south,
These, whose least evil told in alien ears
Turned men's whole blood to tears,

These, whose least sin remembered for
pure shame

Turned all those tears to flame,
Even upon these, when breaks the ex-
treme blow

And all the world cries woe,
When heaven reluctant rains long-suf-
fering fire

On these and their desire,
When his wind shakes them and his
waters whelm

Who rent thy robe and realm,
When they that poured thy dear blood
forth as wine

Pour forth their own for thine,
On these, on these have mercy; not in
hate,

But full of sacred fate,
Strong from the shrine and splendid
from the god,

Smite, with no second rod.
Because they spared not, do thou rather
spare:

Be not one thing they were.
Let not one tongue of theirs who hate
thee say

That thou wast even as they.
Because their hands were bloody, be
thine white;

Show light where they shed night;
Because they are foul, be thou the rather
pure;

Because they are feeble, endure;
Because they had no pity, have thou pity.

And thou, O supreme city,
O priestless Rome that shalt be, take in
trust

Their names, their deeds, their dust,
Who held life less than thou wert; be
the least

To thee indeed a priest,

Priest and burnt-offering and blood-
sacrifice

Given without prayer or price,
A holier immolation than men wist,
A costlier eucharist,
A sacrament more saving; bend thine
head

Above these many dead
Once, and salute with thine eternal eyes
Their lowest head that lies.

Speak from thy lips of immemorial
speech

If but one word for each.
Kiss but one kiss on each thy dead son's
mouth

Fallen dumb or north or south;
And laying but once thine hand on brow
and breast,

Bless them, through whom thou art
blest.

And saying in ears of these thy dead
"Well done,"

Shall they not hear, "O son?"
And bowing thy face to theirs made
pale for thee,

Shall the shut eyes not see?
Yea, through the hollow-hearted world
of death,

As light, as blood, as breath,
Shall there not flash and flow the fiery
sense,

The pulse of prescience?
Shall not these know as in times over-
past

Thee loftiest to the last?
For times and wars shall change, king-
doms and creeds,

And dreams of men, and deeds;
Earth shall grow gray with all her golden
things,

Pale peoples and hoar kings;
But though her thrones and towers of
nations fall,

Death has no part in all;
In the air, nor in the imperishable sea,
Nor heaven, nor truth, nor thee.

Yea, let all sceptre-stricken nations lie,
But live thou though they die;
Let their flags fade as flowers that storm
can mar,

But thine be like a star;
Let England's, if it float not for men free,
Fall, and forget the sea;

Let France's, if it shadow a hateful
head,

Drop as a leaf drops dead;
Thine let what storm soever smite the
rest

Smite as it seems him best;
Thine let the wind that can, by sea or
land,

Wrest from thy banner-hand.
Die they in whom dies freedom, die and
cease,

Though the world weep for these;
Live thou, and love and lift when these
lie dead

The green and white and red.

O our Republic that shalt bind in bands
The kingdomless far lands,
And link the chainless ages; thou that
wast

With England ere she past
Among the faded nations, and shalt be
Again, when sea to sea
Calls through the wind and light of
morning time,

And throneless clime to clime
Makes antiphonal answer; thou that art
Where one man's perfect heart
Burns, one man's brow is brightened for
thy sake,

Thine, strong to make or break;
O fair Republic hallowing with stretched
hands

The limitless free lands,
When all men's heads for love, not fear,
low down

To thy sole royal crown,
As thou to freedom; when man's life
smells sweet,

And at thy bright swift feet
A bloodless and a bondless world is
laid;

Then, when thy men are made,
Let these indeed as we in dreams be-
hold

One chosen of all thy fold,
One of all fair things fairest, one exalt
Above all fear or fault,
One unforgetful of unhappier men
And us who loved her then;

With eyes that outlook suns and dream
on graves;

With voice like quiring waves;

With heart the holier for their memo-
 ries' sake
 Who slept that she might wake ;
 With breast the sweeter for that sweet
 blood lost,
 And all the milkless cost ;
 Lady of earth, whose large equality
 Bends but to her and thee ;
 Equal with heaven, and infinite of years,
 And splendid from quenched tears ;
 Strong with old strength of great things
 fallen and fled,
 Diviner for her dead ;
 Chaste of all stains and perfect from all
 scars,
 Above all storms and stars,
 All winds that blow through time, all
 waves that foam, —
 Our Capitolian Rome.

THALASSIUS.

UPON the flowery forefront of the
 year,
 One wandering by the gray-green April
 sea
 Found on a reach of shingle and shal-
 lower sand,
 Inlaid with starrier glimmering jewel-
 lery
 Left for the sun's love and the light
 wind's cheer
 Along the foam-flowered strand,
 Breeze-brightened, something nearer
 sea than land
 Though the last shoreward blossom-
 fringe was near,
 A babe asleep, with flower-soft face that
 gleamed
 To sun and seaward as it laughed and
 dreamed,
 Too sure of either love for either's
 fear,
 Albeit so birdlike slight and light, it
 seemed
 Nor man, nor mortal child of man, but
 fair
 As even its twin-born tenderer spray-
 flowers were,
 That the wind scatters like an Oread's
 hair.

For when July strewed fire on earth
 and sea
 The last time ere that year,
 Out of the flame of morn Cymothoë
 Beheld one brighter than the sun-bright
 sphere
 Move toward her from its fieriest heart,
 whence trod
 The live sun's very god,
 Across the foam-bright water-ways that
 are
 As heavenlier heavens, with star for
 answering star ;
 And on her eyes and hair and maiden
 mouth
 Felt a kiss falling fierier than the South,
 And heard above afar
 A noise of songs and wind-enamoured
 wings,
 And lutes and lyres of milder and
 mightier strings,
 And round the resonant radiance of his
 car
 Where depth is one with height,
 Light heard as music, music seen as
 light ;
 And with that second moondawn of the
 spring's
 That fosters the first rose,
 A sun-child whiter than the sunlit
 snows
 Was born out of the world of sunless
 things
 That round the round earth flows and
 ebbs and flows.

But he that found the sea-flower by
 the sea,
 And took to foster like a graft of earth,
 Was born of man's most highest and
 heavenliest birth,
 Free-born as winds and stars and waves
 are free ;
 A warrior gray with glories more than
 years,
 Though more of years than change the
 quick to dead
 Had rained their light and darkness on
 his head ;
 A singer that in time's and memory's
 ears
 Should leave such words to sing as all
 his peers

Might praise with hallowing heat of
 rapturous tears,
 Till all the days of human flight were
 fled.
 And at his knees his fosterling was fed,
 Not with man's wine and bread,
 Nor mortal mother-milk of hopes and
 fears,
 But food of deep memorial days long
 sped;
 For bread with wisdom, and with song
 for wine,
 Clear as the full calm's emerald hyaline.
 And from his grave glad lips the boy
 would gather
 Fine honey of song-notes, goldener than
 gold,
 More sweet than bees make of the
 breathing heather,
 That he, as glad and bold,
 Might drink as they, and keep his spirit
 from cold.
 And the boy loved his laurel-laden hair
 As his own father's risen on the eastern
 air,
 And that less white brow-binding bay-
 leaf bloom,
 More than all flowers his father's eyes
 relume;
 And those high songs he heard,
 More than all notes of any landward
 bird,
 More than all sounds less free
 Than the wind's quiring to the choral
 sea.

High things the high song taught
 him: how the breath,
 Too frail for life, may be more strong
 than death;
 And this poor flash of sense in life, that
 gleams
 As a ghost's glory in dreams,
 More stabile than the world's own
 heart's root seems,
 By that strong faith of lordliest love,
 which gives
 To death's own sightless-seeming eyes
 a light
 Clearer, to death's bare bones a verier
 might,
 Than shines or strikes from any man
 that lives;

How he that loves life overmuch shall
 die
 The dog's death, utterly;
 And he that much less loves it than he
 hates
 All wrong-doing that is done,
 Anywhere always underneath the sun,
 Shall live a mightier life than time's or
 fate's.
 One fairer thing he showed him, and
 in might
 More strong than day and night,
 Whose strengths build up time's tower-
 ing period;
 Yea, one thing stronger and more high
 than God,
 Which, if man had not, then should God
 not be:
 And that was Liberty.
 And gladly should man die to gain, he
 said,
 Freedom; and gladlier, having lost, lie
 dead.
 For man's earth was not, nor the sweet
 sea-waves
 His, nor his own land, nor its very
 graves,
 Except they bred not, bore not, hid not
 slaves:
 But all of all that is,
 Were one man free in body and soul,
 were his.

And the song softened, even as
 heaven by night
 Softens, from sunnier down to starrier
 light,
 And with its moon-bright breath
 Blessed life for death's sake, and for
 life's sake death;
 Till as the moon's own beam and breath
 confuse,
 In one clear hueless haze of glimmering
 hues,
 The sea's line, and the land's line, and
 the sky's,
 And light for love of darkness almost
 dies,
 As darkness only lives for light's dear
 love,
 Whose hands the robe of night is woven
 of:

So in that heaven of wondrous words
 were life
 And death brought out of strife;
 Yea, by that strong spell of serene in-
 crease,
 Brought out of strife to peace.

And the song lightened, as the wind
 at morn
 Flashes, and even with lightning of the
 wind
 Night's thick-spun web is thinned,
 And all its weft unwoven and over-
 worn
 Shrinks, as might love from scorn.
 And as when wind and light, on water
 and land,
 Leap as twin gods from heavenward
 hand in hand,
 And with the sound and splendor of
 their leap
 Strike darkness dead, and daunt the
 spirit of sleep,
 And burn it up with fire;
 So with the light that lightened from
 the lyre,
 Was all the bright heat in the child's
 heart stirred,
 And blown with blasts of music into
 flame,
 Till even his sense became
 Fire, as the sense that fires the singing
 bird,
 Whose song calls night by name.
 And in the soul within the sense began
 The manlike passion of a godlike man,
 And in the sense within the soul again
 Thoughts that make men of gods, and
 gods of men.

For love the high song taught him, —
 love that turns
 God's heart toward man as man's to
 Godward; love
 That life and death and life are fash-
 ioned of,
 From the first breath that burns
 Half-kindled on the flower-like yearn-
 ing's lip
 So light and faint that life seems like
 to slip,

To that yet weaklier drawn
 When sunset dies of night's devouring
 dawn;
 But the man dying not wholly as all
 men dies
 If aught be left of his in live men's eyes
 Out of the dawnless dark of death to
 rise;
 If aught of deed or word
 Be seen for all time, or of all time
 heard.
 Love, that though body and soul were
 overthrown,
 Should live for love's sake of itself
 alone,
 Though spirit and flesh were one thing
 doomed and dead,
 Not wholly annihilated.
 Seeing even the hoariest ash-flake that
 the pyre
 Drops, and forgets the thing was once
 afire,
 And gave its heart to feed the pile's full
 flame
 Till its own heart its own heat over-
 came,
 Outlives its own life, though by scarce
 a span,
 As such men dying outlive themselves
 in man,
 Outlive themselves forever; if the heat
 Outburn the heart that kindled it, the
 sweet
 Outlast the flower whose soul it was,
 and flit
 Forth of the body of it
 Into some new shape of a strange per-
 fume
 More potent than its light live spirit of
 bloom, —
 How shall not something of that soul
 re-live,
 That only soul that had such gifts to
 give
 As lighten something even of all men's
 doom,
 Even from the laboring womb,
 Even to the seal set on the unopening
 tomb?
 And these the loving light of song and
 love
 Shall wrap and lap round, and impend
 above,

Imperishable; and all springs born il-
lume
Their sleep with brighter thoughts than
wake the dove
To music, when the hillside winds re-
sume
The marriage-song of heather-flower
and broom
And all the joy thereof.

And hate the song, too, taught him, —
hate of all
That brings or holds in thrall
Of spirit or flesh, free-born ere God be-
gan,
The holy body and sacred soul of man.
And wheresoever a curse was, or a
chain,
A throne for torment or a crown for
bane
Rose, moulded out of poor men's molten
pain,
There, said he, should man's heaviest
hate be set
Inexorably, to faint not or forget
Till the last warmth bled forth of the
last vein
In flesh that none should call a king's
again,
Seeing wolves and dogs and birds that
plague-strike air
Leave the last bone of all the carrion
bare.

And hope the high song taught him,
— hope whose eyes
Can sound the seas unsoundable, the
skies
Inaccessible of eyesight; that can see
What earth beholds not, hear what wind
and sea
Hear not, and speak what all these cry-
ing in one
Can speak not to the sun.
For in her sovereign eyelight all things
are
Clear as the closest seen and kindlier
star
That marries morn and even and win-
ter and spring
With one love's golden ring.

For she can see the days of man, the
birth
Of good, and death of evil things on
earth
Inevitable and infinite, and sure
As present pain is, or herself is pure.
Yea, she can hear and see, beyond all
things
That lighten from before Time's thun-
derous wings
Through the awful circle of wheel-
winged periods,
The tempest of the twilight of all
gods;
And, higher than all the circling course
they ran,
The sundawn of the spirit that was
man.

And fear the song, too, taught him, —
fear to be
Worthless the dear love of the wind
and sea
That bred him fearless, like a sea-mew
reared
In rocks of man's foot feared,
Where naught of wingless life may sing
or shine.
Fear to wax worthless of that heaven
he had
When all the life in all his limbs was
glad,
And all the drops in all his veins were
wine,
And all the pulses music; when his
heart,
Singing, bade heaven and wind and sea
bear part
In one live song's reiteration, and they
bore :
Fear to go crownless of the flower he
wore
When the winds loved him, and the
waters knew
The blithest life that clove their blithe
life through
With living limbs exultant, or held
strife
More amorous than all dalliance aye
anew
With the bright breath and strength of
their large life,

With all strong wrath of all sheer
winds that blew,
All glories of all storms of the air that
fell
Prone, ineluctable,
With roar from heaven of revel, and
with hue
As of a heaven turned hell.
For when the red blast of their breath
had made
All heaven aflush with light more dire
than shade,
He felt it in his blood and eyes and
hair
Burn as if all the fires of the earth and
air
Had laid strong hold upon his flesh,
and stung
The soul behind it as with serpent's
tongue,
Forked like the loveliest lightnings:
nor could bear
But hardly, half distraught with strong
delight,
The joy that like a garment wrapped
him round,
And lapped him over and under
With raiment of great light,
And rapture of great sound
At every loud leap earthward of the
thunder
From heaven's most furthest bound :
So seemed all heaven in hearing and in
sight,
Alive and mad with glory and angry
joy,
That something of its marvellous mirth
and might
Moved even to madness, fledged as even
for flight,
The blood and spirit of one but mortal
boy.

So, clothed with love, and fear that
love makes great,
And armed with hope and hate,
He set first foot upon the spring-flow-
ered ways
That all feet pass and praise.
And one dim dawn between the winter
and spring,
In the sharp harsh wind harrying heaven
and earth

To put back April that had borne his
birth
From sunward on her sunniest shower-
struck wing,
With tears and laughter for the dew-
dropt thing,
Slight as indeed a dewdrop, by the sea
One met him lovelier than all men may
be,
God-featured, with god's eyes; and in
their might
Somewhat that drew men's own to mar
their sight,
Even of all eyes drawn toward him;
and his mouth
Was as the very rose of all men's youth,
One rose of all the rose-beds in the world:
But round his brows the curls were
snakes that curled,
And like his tongue a serpent's; and his
voice
Speaks death, and bids rejoice.
Yet then he spake no word, seeming as
dumb,
A dumb thing mild and hurtless; nor
at first
From his bowed eyes seemed any light
to come,
Nor his meek lips for blood or tears to
thirst:
But as one blind and mute in mild,
sweet wise,
Pleading for pity of piteous lips and
eyes,
He strayed with faint, bare, lily-lovely
feet,
Helpless, and flower-like sweet :
Nor might man see, not having word
hereof,
That this of all gods was the great god
Love.

And seeing him lovely and like a
little child
That well-nigh wept for wonder that it
smiled,
And was so feeble and fearful, with soft
speech
The youth bespake him softly; but
there fell
From the sweet lips no sweet word
audible
That ear or thought might reach;

No sound to make the dim cold silence
glad,
No breath to thaw the hard harsh air
with heat;
Only the saddest smile of all things
sweet,
Only the sweetest smile of all things
sad.

And so they went together one green
way
Till April dying made free the world
for May;
And on his guide suddenly Love's face
turned,
And in his blind eyes burned
Hard light and heat of laughter; and
like flame
That opens in a mountain's ravening
mouth
To blear and sear the sunlight from the
south,
His mute mouth opened, and his first
word came:

"Knowest thou me now by name?"
And all his stature waxed immeasur-
able,
As of one shadowing heaven and light-
ening hell;
And statelier stood he than a tower that
stands
And darkens with its darkness far-off
sands
Whereon the sky leans red;
And with a voice that stilled the winds
he said,—
"I am he that was thy lord before thy
birth,
I am he that is thy lord till thou turn
earth:
I make the night more dark, and all the
morrow
Dark as the night whose darkness was
my breath:
O fool, my name is Sorrow:
Thou fool, my name is Death."

And he that heard spake not, and
looked right on
Again, and Love was gone.

Through many a night, toward many
a wearier day,

His spirit bore his body down its way.
Through many a day, toward many a
wearier night,
His soul sustained his sorrows in her
sight.
And earth was bitter, and heaven, and
even the sea,
Sorrowful even as he.
And the wind helped not, and the sun
was dumb;
And with too long strong stress of grief
to be,
His heart grew sear and numb.

And one bright eve ere summer in
autumn sank,
At star-dawn standing on a gray sea-
bank
He felt the wind fitfully shift and
heave
As toward a stormier eve;
And all the wan wide sea shuddered;
and earth
Shook underfoot, as toward some time-
less birth,
Intolerable and inevitable; and all
Heaven, darkling, trembled like a
stricken thrall;
And far out of the quivering east, and
far
From past the moonrise and its guiding
star,
Began a noise of tempest, and a light
That was not of the lightning; and a
sound
Rang with it round and round,
That was not of the thunder; and a
flight
As of blown clouds by night,
That was not of them; and with songs
and cries
That sang and shrieked their soul out
at the skies,
A shapeless earthly storm of shapes
began
From all ways round to move in on the
man,
Clamorous against him silent; and their
feet
Were as the winds are fleet,
And their shrill songs were as wild
birds' are sweet.

And as when all the world of earth
 was wronged,
 And all the host of all men driven
 afoam
 By the red hand of Rome,
 Round some fierce amphitheatre over
 thronged
 With fair clear faces full of bloodier
 lust
 Than swells and stings the tiger when
 his mood
 Is fieriest after blood,
 And drunk with trampling of the mur-
 derous must
 That soaks and stains the tortuous
 close-coiled wood
 Made monstrous with its myriad-mus-
 tering brood,
 Face by fair face panted and gleamed
 and pressed,
 And breast by passionate breast
 Heaved hot with ravenous rapture, as
 they quaffed
 The red ripe full fume of the deep live
 draught,
 The sharp quick reek of keen fresh
 bloodshed, blown
 Through the dense deep drift up to the
 emperor's throne
 From the under steaming sands,
 With clamor of all-applausive throats
 and hands,
 Mingling in mirthful time
 With shrill, blithe mockeries of the
 lithe-limbed mime;
 So from somewhence far forth of the
 unbeholden,
 Dreadfully driven from over and after
 and under,
 Fierce, blown through fifes of brazen
 blast and golden,
 With sound of chiming waves that
 drown the thunder,
 Or thunder that strikes dumb the sea's
 own chimes,
 Began the bellowing of the bull-voiced
 mimes,
 Terrible; firs bowed down as briers or
 palms
 Even at the breathless blast as of a
 breeze
 Fulfilled with clamor and clangor and
 storms of psalms;

Red hands rent up the roots of old
 world trees,
 Thick flames of torches tossed as
 tumbling seas
 Made mad the moonless and infuriate
 air
 That, ravening, revelled in the riotous
 hair
 And raiment of the furred Bassarides.

So came all those in on him; and his
 heart,
 As out of sleep suddenly struck a-start,
 Danced, and his flesh took fire of theirs,
 and grief
 Was as a last year's leaf
 Blown dead far down the wind's way;
 and he set
 His pale mouth to the brightest mouth
 it met
 That laughed for love against his lips,
 and bade
 Follow; and in following, all his blood
 grew glad
 And as again a seabird's; for the wind
 Took him to bathe him deep round
 breast and brow;
 Not as it takes a dead leaf drained and
 thinned,
 But as the brightest bay-flower blown
 on bough,
 Set springing toward it singing: and
 they rode
 By many a vine-leaved, many a rose-
 hung road,
 Exalt with exaltation; many a night
 Set all its stars upon them as for spies
 On many a moon-bewildering mountain
 height
 Where he rode only by the fierier light
 Of his dread lady's hot, sweet hunger-
 ing eyes.
 For the moon wandered witless of her
 way,
 Spell-stricken by strong magic in such
 wise
 As wizards use to set the stars astray.
 And in his ears the music that makes
 mad
 Beat always; and what way them usic
 bade,
 That alway rode he; nor was any sleep
 His, nor from height nor deep.

But heaven was as red iron, slumber-
less,
And had no heart to bless;
And earth lay sear and darkling as dis-
traught,
And help in her was naught.

Then many a midnight, many a morn
and even,
His mother, passing forth of her fair
heaven,
With goodlier gifts than all save gods
can give
From earth or from the heaven where
sea-things live,
With shine of sea-flowers through the
bay-leaf braid
Woven for a crown her foam-white
hands had made
To crown him with land's laurel and
sea-dew,
Sought the sea-bird that was her boy:
but he
Sat panther-throned beside Erigone,
Riding the red ways of the revel
through
Midmost of pale-mouthed passion's
crownless crew.
Till on some winter's dawn of some
dim year
He let the vine-bit on the panther's lip
Slide, and the green rein slip,
And set his eyes to seaward, nor gave
ear
If sound from landward hailed him,
dire or dear;
And passing forth of all those fair
fierce ranks
Back to the gray sea-banks,
Against a sea-rock lying, aslant the
steep,
Fell after many sleepless dreams on
sleep.

And in his sleep the dun green light
was shed
Heavily round his head
That through the vale of sea falls fath-
om-deep,
Blurred like a lamp's that when the
night drops dead
Dies; and his eyes gat grace of sleep
to see

The deep divine dark day-shine of the
sea,
Dense water-walls and clear dusk water-
ways,
Broad-based, or branching as a sea-
flower sprays
That side or this dividing; and anew
The glory of all her glories that he
knew.
And in sharp rapture of recovering
tears
He woke on fire with yearnings of old
years,
Pure as one purged of pain that pas-
sion bore,
Ill child of bitter mother; for his own
Looked laughing toward him from her
mid-sea throne,
Up toward him there ashore.

Thence in his heart the great same
joy began,
Of child that made him man
And, turned again from all hearts else
on quest,
He communed with his own heart, and
had rest.
And like the sea-winds upon loud
waters ran
His days and dreams together, till the
joy
Burned in him of the boy;
Till the earth's great comfort and the
sweet sea's breath
Breathed and blew life in where was
heartless death,—
Death spirit-stricken of soul-sick days,
where strife
Of thought and flesh made mock of
death and life.
And grace returned upon him of his
birth
Where heaven was mixed with heaven-
like sea and earth;
And song shot forth strong wings that
took the sun
From inward, fledged with might of
sorrow and mirth,
And father's fire made mortal in his son.
Nor was not spirit of strength in blast
and breeze
To exalt again the sun's child and the
sea's;

For, as wild mares in Thessaly grow
 great
 With child of ravishing winds, that vio-
 late
 Their leaping length of limb with
 manes like fire,
 And eyes outburning heaven's
 With fires more violent than the light-
 ning levin's,
 And breath drained out and desperate
 of desire,
 Even so the spirit in him, when winds
 grew strong,
 Grew great with child of song.
 Nor less than when his veins first leapt
 for joy
 To draw delight in such as burns a boy,
 Now, too, the soul of all his senses felt
 The passionate pride of deep sea-pulses
 dealt
 Through nerve and jubilant vein
 As from the love and largess of old
 time;
 And with his heart again
 The tidal throb of all the tides keep
 rhyme,
 And charm him from his own soul's
 separate sense
 With infinite and invasive influence,
 That made strength sweet in him, and
 sweetness strong,
 Being now no more a singer, but a song.

Till one clear day, when brighter sea-
 wind blew,
 And louder sea-shine lightened, for the
 waves
 Were full of godhead and the light that
 saves,
 His father's and their spirit had pierced
 him through,
 He felt strange breath and light all
 round him shed
 That bowed him down with rapture;
 and he knew
 His father's hand, hallowing his hum-
 bled head,
 And the old great voice of the old good
 time, that said:

"Child of my sunlight, and the sea,
 from birth
 A fosterling and fugitive on earth;

Sleepless of soul as wind or wave or
 fire,
 A man-child with an ungrown god's
 desire;
 Because thou hast loved not mortal
 more than me,
 Thy father, and thy mother-hearted
 sea;
 Because thou hast set thine heart to
 sing, and sold
 Life and life's love for song, God's liv-
 ing gold;
 Because thou hast given thy flower and
 fire of youth
 To feed men's hearts with visions truer
 than truth;
 Because thou hast kept in those world-
 wandering eyes
 The light that makes me music of the
 skies;
 Because thou hast heard, with world-
 unwearied ears,
 The music that puts light into the
 spheres,—
 Have therefore in thine heart and in
 thy mouth
 The sound of song that mingles north
 and south,
 The song of all the winds that sing of
 me,
 And in thy soul the sense of all the
 sea."

HERSE.

WHEN grace is given us ever to behold
 A child some sweet months old,
 Love, laying across our lips his finger,
 saith,
 Smiling, with bated breath,
 Hush! for the holiest thing that lives is
 here,
 And heaven's own heart how near!
 How dare we, that may gaze not on the
 sun,
 Gaze on this verier one?
 Heart, hold thy peace; eyes, be cast
 down for shame;
 Lips, breathe not yet its name.
 In heaven they know what name to call
 it: we,
 How should we know? For, see!

The adorable sweet living marvelous

Strange light that lightens us
Who gaze, desertless of such glorious
grace,

Full in a babe's warm face!
All roses that the morning rears are
naught,

All stars not worth a thought,
Set this one star against them, or sup-
pose

As rival this one rose.
What price could pay with earth's
whole weight of gold

One least flushed roseleaf's fold
Of all this dimpling store of smiles that
shine

From each warm curve and line,
Each charm of flower-sweet flesh, to re-illumine

The dappled rose-red bloom
Of all its dainty body, honey-sweet
Clenched hands and curled-up feet,
That on the roses of the dawn have
trod

As they came down from God,
And keep the flush and colour that the
sky

Takes when the sun comes nigh,
And keep the likeness of the smile their
grace

Evoked on God's own face
When, seeing this work of his most
heavenly mood,

He saw that it was good?
For all its warm sweet body seems one
smile,

And mere men's love too vile
To meet it, or with eyes that worship
dims

Read o'er the little limbs,
Read all the book of all their beauties
o'er,

Rejoice, revere, adore,
Bow down and worship each delight in
turn,

Laugh, wonder, yield, and yearn.
But when our trembling kisses dare, yet
dread,

Even to draw nigh its head,
And touch, and scarce with touch or
breath surprise

Its mild miraculous eyes

Out of their viewless vision — O, what
then,

What may be said of men?
What speech may name a new-born
child? what word

Earth ever spake or heard?
The best men's tongue that ever glory
knew

Called that a drop of dew
Which from the breathing creature's
kindly womb

Came forth in blameless bloom.
We have no word, as had those men
most high,

To call a baby by.
Rose, ruby, lily, pearl of stormless
seas —

A better word than these,
A better sign it was than flower or
gem

That love revealed to them:
They knew that whence comes light or
quickenning flame,

Thence only this thing came,
And only might be likened of our love
To somewhat born above,

Not even to sweetest things dropped
else on earth,
Only to dew's own birth.

Nor doubt we but their sense was
heavenly true,

Babe, when we gaze on you,
A dew-drop out of heaven, whose colors
are

More bright than sun or star,
As now, ere watching love dare fear or
hope,

Lips, hands, and eyelids ope,
And all your life is mixed with earthly
heaven.

O child, what news from heaven?

EIGHT YEARS OLD.

I.

SUN, whom the faltering snow-cloud
fears,

Rise, let the time of year be May,
Speak now the word that April hears,
Let March have all his royal way;

Bid a spring raise in winter's ears
 All tunes her children hear or play,
 Because the crown of eight glad years
 On one bright head is set to-day.

II.

What matters cloud or sun to-day
 To him who wears the wreath of years
 So many, and all like flowers at play
 With wind and sunshine, while his ears
 Hear only song on every way?
 More sweet than spring triumphant hears
 Ring through the revel-rout of May
 Are these, the notes that winter fears.

III.

Strong-hearted winter knows and fears
 The music made of love at play,
 Or haply loves the tune he hears
 From hearts fulfilled with flowering May,
 Whose molten music thaws his ears
 Late frozen, deaf but yesterday
 To sounds of dying and dawning years,
 Now quickened on his deathward way.

IV.

For deathward now lies winter's way
 Down the green vestibule of years
 That each year brightens day by day
 With flower and shower till hope
 scarce fears,
 And fear grows wholly hope of May.
 But we — the music in our ears
 Made of love's pulses as they play,
 The heart alone that makes it hears.

V.

The heart it is that plays and hears
 High salutation of to-day.
 Tongue falters, hand shrinks back, song
 fears
 Its own unworthiness to play
 Fit music for those eight sweet years,
 Or sing their blithe accomplished
 way.
 No song quite worth a young child's
 ears
 Broke ever even from birds in May.

VI.

There beats not in the heart of May,
 When summer hopes and springtide
 fears,
 There falls not from the height of day,
 When sunlight speaks and silence
 hears,
 So sweet a psalm as children play
 And sing, each hour of all their years,
 Each moment of their lovely way,
 And know not how it thrills our ears.

VII.

Ah! child, what are we, that our ears
 Should hear you singing on your
 way,
 Should have this happiness? The
 years
 Whose hurrying wings about us play
 Are not like yours, whose flower-time
 fears
 Naught worse than sunlit showers in
 May,
 Being sinless as the spring, that hears
 Her own heart praise her every day.

VIII.

Yet we, too, triumph in the day
 That bare, to entrance our eyes and
 ears,
 To lighten daylight, and to play
 Such notes as darkness knows and
 fears,
 The child whose face illumines our way,
 Whose voice lifts up the heart that
 hears,
 Whose hand is as the hand of May
 To bring us flowers from eight full
 years.

FEB. 4, 1882.

"NON DOLET"

It does not hurt. She looked along the
 knife
 Smiling, and watched the thick drops
 mix and run
 Down the sheer blade: not that which
 had been done
 Could hurt the sweet sense of the
 Roman wife,

But that which was to do yet ere the
 strife
 Could end for each forever, and the
 sun :
 Nor was the palm yet nor was peace
 yet won
 While pain had power upon her hus-
 band's life.

It does not hurt, Italia. Thou art more
 Than bride to bridegroom : how shalt
 thou not take
 The gift love's blood has reddened
 for thy sake ?
 Was not thy life-blood given for us
 before ?
 And if love's heart-blood can avail
 thy need,
 And thou not die, how should it hurt
 indeed ?

LINES ON THE DEATH OF EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY.

LAST high star of the years whose
 thunder
 Still men's listening remembrance
 hears,
 Last light left of our fathers' years,
 Watched with honour and hailed with
 wonder,
 Thee too, then, have the years borne
 under,
 Thou too, then, hast regained thy
 peers.
 Wings that warred with the winds of
 morning,
 Storm-winds rocking the red great
 dawn,
 Close at last, and a film is drawn
 Over the eyes of the storm-bird, scorn-
 ing
 Now no longer the loud wind's warn-
 ing,
 Waves that threaten or waves that
 fawn.

Peers were none of thee left us living.
 Peers of theirs we shall see no more.
 Eight years over the full fourscore

Knew thee : now shalt thou sleep, for
 giving
 All griefs past of the wild world's giv-
 ing,
 Moored at last on the stormless
 shore.

World-wide liberty's lifelong lover,
 Lover no less of the strength of
 song,
 Sea-king, swordsman, hater of wrong
 Over thy dust that the dust shall cover
 Comes my song as a bird to hover,
 Borne of its will as of wings along.

Cherished of thee were this brief song's
 brothers
 Now that follows them, cherishing
 thee.
 Over the tides and the tideless sea,
 Soft as a smile of the earth our
 mother's,
 Flies it faster than all those others,
 First of the troop at thy tomb to
 be.

Memories of Greece, and the mountain's
 hollow
 Guarded alone of thy loyal sword,
 Hold thy name for our hearts in
 ward :
 Yet more fain are our hearts to fol-
 low
 One way now with the southward swal-
 low
 Back to the grave of the man their
 lord.

Heart of hearts, art thou moved not,
 hearing
 Surely, if hearts of the dead may
 hear,
 Whose true heart it is now draws
 near ?
 Surely the sense of it thrills thee, cheer-
 ing
 Darkness and death with the news now
 nearing, —
 Shelley, Trelawny rejoins thee here.

OFF SHORE.

WHEN the might of the summer
Is most on the sea;
When the days overcome her
With joy but to be,
With rapture of royal enchantment, and
sorcery that sets her not free, —

But for hours upon hours
As a thrall she remains
Spell-bound as with flowers,
And content in their chains,
And her loud steeds fret not, and lift not
a lock of their deep white manes;

Then only, far under
In the depths of her hold,
Some gleam of its wonder
Man's eye may behold,
Its wild weed forests of crimson and
russet and olive and gold.

Still deeper and dimmer
And goodlier they glow
For the eyes of the swimmer
Who scans them below
As he crosses the zone of their flower-
age that knows not of sunshine
and snow.

Soft blossomless frondage
And foliage that gleams
As to prisoners in bondage
The light of their dreams,
The desire of a dawn unbeholden, with
hope on the wings of its beams.

Not as prisoners entombed,
Waxen haggard and wizen,
But consoled and illumed
In the depths of their prison
With delight of the light everlasting,
and vision of dawn on them
risen, —

From the banks and the beds
Of the waters divine,
They lift up their heads,
And the flowers of them shine
Through the splendor of darkness that
clothes them, of water that glim-
mers like wine.

Bright bank over bank
Making glorious the gloom,
Soft rank upon rank,
Strange bloom after bloom,
They kindle the liquid low twilight, the
dusk of the dim sea's womb.

Through the subtle and tangible
Gloom without form,
Their branches, infrangible
Even of storm,
Spread softer their sprays than the
shoots of the woodland when
April is warm.

As the flight of the thunder, full
Charged with its word,
Dividing the wonderful
Depths like a bird,
Speaks wrath and delight to the heart
of the night that exults to have
heard, —

So swiftly, though soundless
In silence's ear,
Light, winged from the boundless
Blue depths full of cheer,
Speaks joy to the heart of the waters
that part not before him, but hear.

Light perfect and visible,
Godhead of God,
God indivisible,
Lifts but his rod,
And the shadows are scattered in sun-
der, and darkness is light at his
nod.

At the touch of his wand,
At the nod of his head
From the spaces beyond
Where the dawn hath her bed,
Earth, water, and air are transfigured,
and rise as one risen from the
dead.

He puts forth his hand,
And the mountains are thrilled
To the heart, as they stand
In his presence, fulfilled
With his glory that utters his grace
upon earth, and her sorrows are
stilled.

The moan of her travail
That groans for the light
Till day-spring unravel
The web of the night,
At the sound of the strings of the
music of morning, falls dumb
with delight.

He gives forth his word,
And the word that he saith,
Ere well it be heard,
Strikes darkness to death;
For the thought of his heart is the sun-
rise, and dawn as the sound of
his breath.

And the strength of its pulses,
That passion makes proud,
Confounds and convulses
The depths of the cloud
Of the darkness that heaven was ingirt
with, divided and rent as a
shroud, —

As the veil of the shrine
Of the temple of old,
When darkness divine
Over noonday was rolled;
So the heart of the night by the pulse
of the light is convulsed and
controlled.

And the sea's heart, groaning
For glories withdrawn,
And the waves' mouths, moaning
All night for the dawn,
Are uplift as the hearts and the mouths
of the singers on lea-side and lawn.

And the sound of the quiring
Of all these as one,
Desired and desiring
Till dawn's will be done,
Fills full with delight of them heaven
till it burns as the heart of the
sun;

Till the waves, too, inherit,
And waters take part
In the sense of the spirit
That breathes from his heart,
And are kindled with music, as fire when
the lips of the morning part, —

With music unheard
In the light of her lips,
In the life-giving word
Of the dewfall that drips
On the grasses of earth, and the wind
that enkindles the wings of the
ships.

White glories of wings
As of seafaring birds,
That flock from the springs
Of the sunrise in herds,
With the wind for a headsmen, and
hasten or halt at the change of
his words;

As the watchwords change,
When the wind's note shifts,
And the skies grow strange,
And the white squall drifts
Up sharp from the sea-line, vexing the
sea till the low cloud lifts.

At the charge of his word
Bidding pause, bidding haste,
When the ranks are stirred
And the lines displaced,
They scatter as wild swans, parting
adrift on the wan green waste.

At the hush of his word,
In a pause of his breath
When the waters have heard
His will that he saith,
They stand as a flock penned close in
its fold for division of death.

As a flock by division
Of death to be thinned,
As the shades in a vision
Of spirits that sinned;
So glimmer their shrouds and their
sheetings as clouds on the stream
of the wind.

But the sun stands fast,
And the sea burns bright,
And the flight of them past
Is no more than the flight
Of the snow-soft swarm of serene wings
poised and afloat in the light.

Like flowers upon flowers,
 In a festival way,
 When hours after hours
 Shed grace on the day,
 White blossom-like butterflies hover
 and glean through the snows of
 the spray.

Like snow-colored petals
 Of blossoms that flee
 From storm that unsettles
 The flowers as the tree,
 They flutter, a legion of flowers on the
 wing, through the field of the sea.

Through the furrowless field
 Where the foam-blossoms blow,
 And the secrets are sealed
 Of their harvest below,
 They float in the path of the sunbeams,
 as flakes or as blossoms of snow.

Till the sea's ways darken,
 And the god, withdrawn,
 Give ear not, or hearken
 If prayer on him fawn,
 And the sun's self seem but a shadow,
 the noon as a ghost of the dawn.

No shadow, but rather,
 God, father of song,
 Shew grace to me, Father
 God, loved of me long,
 That I lose not the light of thy face,
 that my trust in thee work me
 not wrong, —

While yet I make forward
 With face toward thee,
 Not turned yet in shoreward,
 Be thine upon me;
 Be thy light on my forehead, or ever I
 turn it again from the sea.

As a kiss on my brow
 Be the light of thy grace,
 Be thy glance on me now
 From the pride of thy place:
 As the sign of a sire to a son, be the
 light on my face of thy face.

Thou wast father of olden
 Times hailed and adored.

And the sense of thy golden
 Great harp's monochord
 Was the joy in the soul of the singers
 that hailed thee for master and
 lord.

Fair father of all
 In thy ways that have trod,
 That have risen at thy call,
 That have thrilled at thy nod,
 Arise, shine, lighten upon me, O sun:
 that we see to be God.

As my soul has been dutiful
 Only to thee,
 O God! most beautiful,
 Lighten thou me,
 As I swim through the dim long rollers,
 with eyelids uplift from the sea.

Be praised and adored of us,
 All in accord,
 Father and lord of us
 Always adored,
 The slayer, and the stayer, and the
 harper, the light of us all, and
 our lord.

At the sound of thy lyre,
 At the touch of thy rod,
 Air quickens to fire
 By the foot of thee trod,
 The savior, and healer, and singer,
 the living and visible God.

The years are before thee
 As shadows of thee,
 As men that adore thee,
 As cloudlets that flee:
 But thou art the God, and thy kingdom is
 heaven, and thy shrine is the sea.

EVENING ON THE BROADS.

OVER two shadowless waters, adrift as
 a pinnace in peril,
 Hangs as in heavy suspense, charged
 with irresolute light,
 Softly the soul of the sunset upholden
 awhile on the sterile
 Waves and wastes of the land, half
 repossessed by the night.

Inland glimmer the shallows asleep,
 and afar in the breathless
 Twilight: yonder the depths darken
 afar and asleep.
 Slowly the semblance of death out of
 heaven descends on the death-
 less
 Waters: hardly the light lives on the
 face of the deep,—
 Hardly, but here for a while. All
 over the gray soft shallow
 Hover the colors and clouds of the
 twilight, void of a star.
 As a bird unfledged is the broad-winged
 night, whose winglets are cal-
 low
 Yet, but soon with their plumes will
 she cover her brood from afar,—
 Cover the brood of her worlds that cum-
 ber the skies with their blossom,
 Thick as the darkness of leaf-shad-
 owed spring is encumbered with
 flowers.
 World upon world is enwound in the
 bountiful girth of her bosom,
 Warm and lustrous with life lovely
 to lock on as ours.
 Still is the sunset adrift as a spirit in
 doubt that dissembles
 Still with itself, being sick of division,
 and dimmed by dismay—
 Nay, not so; but with love and delight
 beyond passion it trembles,
 Fearful and fain of the night, lovely
 with love of the day:
 Fain and fearful of rest that is like unto
 death, and begotten
 Out of the womb of the tomb, born
 of the seed of the grave:
 Lovely with shadows of loves that are
 only not wholly forgotten,
 Only not wholly suppressed by the
 dark, as a wreck by the wave.
 Still there linger the loves of the morn-
 ing and noon, in a vision
 Blindly beheld, but in vain; ghosts
 that are tired, and would rest.
 But the glories beloved of the night
 rise all too dense for division,
 Deep in the depth of her breast shel-
 tered as doves in a nest.
 Fainter the beams of the loves of the
 daylight season enkindled

Wane, and the memories of hours
 that were fair with the love of
 them fade;
 Loftier, aloft of the lights of the sunset
 stricken and dwindled,
 Gather the signs of the love at the
 heart of the night new-made.
 New-made night, new-born of the sun
 set, immeasurable, endless,
 Opens the secret of love hid from
 old in her heart,—
 In the deep sweet heart full-charged
 with faultless love of the friend-
 less
 Spirits of men that are eased when
 the wheels of the sun depart.
 Still is the sunset afloat as a ship on
 the waters upholden
 Full-sailed, wide-winged, poised softly
 forever a-sway—
 Nay, not so, but at least for a little
 a while at the golden
 Limit of arching air fain for an hour
 to delay
 Here on the bar of the sand-bank
 steep yet aslope to the gleaming
 Waste of the water without, waste
 of the water within,
 Lights overhead and lights underneath
 seen doubtfully dreaming
 Whether the day be done, whether
 the night may begin.
 Far and afar and farther again, the
 falter and hover,
 Warm on the water, and deep in the
 sky, and pale on the cloud:
 Colder again, and slowly remoter, afraid
 to recover
 Breath, yet fain to revive, as it seems
 from the skirt of the shroud.
 Faintly the heart-beats shorten an
 pause of the light in the west-
 ward
 Heaven, as eastward quicken the
 paces of star upon star
 Hurried and eager of life as a child
 that strains to the breast-ward
 Eagerly, yearning forth of the deep
 where the ways of them are,
 Glad of the glory of the gift of the
 life and the wealth of its wonder
 Fain of the night, and the sea, and
 the sweet wan face of the earth

Over them air grows deeper, intense
 with delight in them: under
 Things are thrilled in their sleep, as
 with sense of a sure new birth.
 But here by the sand-bank watching,
 with eyes on the sea-line, stranger
 Grows to me also the weight of the
 sea-ridge gazed on of me,
 Heavily heaped up, changefully change-
 less, void though of danger,
 Void not of menace, but full of the
 might of the dense dull sea.
 Like as the wave is before me, behind
 is the bank deep-drifted;
 Yellow and thick as the bank is be-
 hind me, in front is the wave.
 As the wall of a prison imprisoning the
 mere, is the girth of it lifted;
 But the rampire of water in front is
 erect as the wall of a grave.
 And the crests of it crumble and topple
 and change, but the wall is not
 broken:
 Standing still dry-shod, I see it as
 higher than my head,
 Moving inland alway again, reared up
 as in token
 Still of impending wrath still in the
 foam of it shed.
 And even in the pauses between them,
 dividing the rollers in sunder,
 High overhead seems ever the sea-
 line fixed as a mark;
 And the shore where I stand, as a val-
 ley beholden of hills whence
 thunder
 Cloud and torrent and storm, dark-
 ening the depths of the dark.
 Up to the sea, not upon it or over it,
 upward from under
 Seems he to gaze, whose eyes yearn
 after it here from the shore;
 A wall of turbid water, a-slope to the
 wide sky's wonder
 Of color and cloud, it climbs, or
 spreads as a slanted floor.
 And the large lights change on the face
 of the mere, like things that were
 living,
 Winged and wonderful, beams like
 as birds are that pass and are free;
 But the light is dense as darkness, a
 gift withheld in the giving,

That lies as dead on the fierce dull
 face of the landward sea.
 Stained and stifled and soiled, made
 earthlier than earth is and duller,
 Grimly she puts back light as re-
 jected, a thing put away:
 No transparent rapture, a molten music
 of color;
 No translucent love taken and given
 of the day.
 Fettered and marred and begrimed, is
 the light's live self on her falling,
 As the light of a man's life lighted
 the fume of a dungeon mars:
 Only she knows of the wind, when her
 wrath gives ear to him calling,
 The delight of the light she knows
 not, nor answers the sun or the
 stars.
 Love she hath none to return for the
 luminous love of their giving:
 None to reflect from the bitter and
 shallow response of her heart.
 Yearly she feeds on her dead, yet her-
 self seems dead and not living,
 Or confused as a soul heavy-laden
 with trouble that will not depart.
 In the sound of her speech to the dark-
 ness the moan of her evil remorse
 is,
 Haply, for strong ships gnawed by
 the dog-toothed sea-bank's fang,
 And trampled to death by the rage of
 the feet of her foam-lipped horses,
 Whose manes are yellow as plague,
 and as ensigns of pestilence hang,
 That wave in the foul faint air of the
 breath of a death-stricken city;
 So menacing heaves she the manes of
 her rollers knotted with sand,
 Discolored, opaque, suspended in sign
 as of strength without pity,
 That shake with flameless thunder
 the low long length of the strand.
 Here, far off in the farther extreme of
 the shore as it lengthens
 Northward, lonely for miles, ere ever
 a village begin,
 On the lapsing land that recedes as
 the growth of the strong sea
 strengthens
 Shoreward, thrusting further and fur-
 ther its outworks in,

Here in Shakespeare's vision, a flower
 of her kin forsaken,
 Lay in her golden raiment alone on
 the wild wave's edge,
 Surely by no shore else, but here on
 the bank storm-shaken,
 Perdita, bright as a dewdrop engilt
 of the sun on the sedge.
 Here on a shore unbeheld of his eyes,
 in a dream, he beheld her
 Outcast, fair as a fairy, the child of a
 far-off king;
 And over the babe-flower gently the
 head of a pastoral elder
 Bowed, compassionate, hoar as the
 hawthorn-blossom in spring,
 And kind as harvest in autumn: a
 shelter of shade on the lonely
 Shelterless unknown shore, scourged
 of implacable waves:
 Here, where the wind walks royal,
 alone in his kingdom, and only
 Sounds to the sedges a wail as of
 triumph that conquers and
 craves.
 All these waters and wastes are his
 empire of old, and awaken
 From barren and stagnant slumber
 at only the sound of his breath:
 Yet the hunger is eased not that aches
 in his heart, nor the goal over-
 taken
 That his wide wings yearn for, and
 labor as hearts that yearn after
 death.
 All the solitude sighs and expects with
 a blind expectation
 Somewhat unknown of its own sad
 heart, grown heart-sick of strife:
 Till sometime its wild heart maddens,
 and moans, and the vast ulula-
 tion
 Takes wing with the clouds on the
 waters, and wails to be quit of
 its life.
 For the spirit and soul of the waste is
 the wind, and his wings with
 their waving
 Darken and lighten the darkness and
 light of it thickened or thinned,
 But the heart that impels them is even
 as a conqueror's insatiably crav-
 ing

That victory can fill not, as power can
 not satiate the want of the wind
 All these moorlands and marshes are
 full of his might, and oppose no
 Aught of defence nor of barrier, o
 forest or precipice piled;
 But the will of the wind works ever as
 his that desires what he knows
 not,
 And the wail of his want unfulfilled is
 as one making moan for her child
 And the cry of his triumph is even as
 the crying of hunger that mad
 dens
 The heart of a strong man, aching in
 vain as the wind's heart aches;
 And the sadness itself of the land for
 its infinite solitude saddens
 More for the sound than the silence
 athirst for the sound that slakes
 And the sunset at last, and the twilight
 are dead; and the darkness is
 breathless
 With fear of the wind's breath ris-
 ing that seems and seems not to
 sleep;
 But a sense of the sound of it alway, a
 spirit unsleeping and deathless,
 Ghost or god, evermore moves on
 the face of the deep.

THE EMPEROR'S PROGRESS.

A STUDY IN THREE STAGES.

(On the Busts of Nero in the Uffizj.)

A CHILD of brighter than the morning's
 birth,
 And lovelier than all smiles that may
 be smiled
 Save only of little children undefiled
 Sweet, perfect, witless of their own
 dear worth,
 Live rose of love, mute melody of
 mirth,
 Glad as a bird is when the woods are
 mild,
 Adorable as is nothing save a child,
 Hails with wide eyes and lips his life
 on earth,

His lovely life with all its heaven to be.
 And whoso reads the name inscribed,
 or hears,
 Feels his own heart a frozen well of
 tears,
 Child, for deep dread and fearful pity
 of thee
 Whom God would not let rather die
 than see
 The incumbent horror of impending
 years.

II.

Man, that wast godlike being a child,
 and now,
 No less than kinglike, art no more in
 sooth
 For all thy grace and lordliness of
 youth,
 The crown that bids men's branded
 foreheads bow,
 Much more has branded and bowed
 down thy brow,
 And gnawn upon it as with fire or
 tooth
 Of steel or snake so sorely, that the
 truth
 Seems here to bear false witness. Is it
 thou,
 Child? and is all the summer of all thy
 spring
 This? are the smiles that drew men's
 kisses down
 All faded and transfigured to the
 frown
 That grieves thy face? Art thou this
 weary thing?
 Then is no slave's load heavier than
 a crown,
 And such a thrall no bondman as a
 king.

III.

Misery beyond all men's most miser-
 able,
 Absolute, whole, defiant of defence,
 Inevitable, inexplicable, intense,
 More vast than heaven is high, more
 deep than hell,
 Past cure or charm of solace or of
 spell,

Possesses and pervades the spirit
 and sense
 Whereto the expanse of the earth
 pays tribute; whence
 Breeds evil only, and broods on fumes
 that swell
 Rank from the blood of brother and
 mother and wife.
 "Misery of miseries, all is misery,"
 saith
 The heavy fair-faced hateful head, at
 strife
 With its own lusts that burn with
 feverous breath,
 Lips which the loathsome bitterness of
 life
 Leaves fearful of the bitterness of
 death.

SIX YEARS OLD.

To H. W. M.

BETWEEN the springs of six and seven,
 Two fresh years' fountains, clear
 Of all but golden sand for leaven,
 Child, midway passing here,
 As earth for love's sake dares bless
 heaven,
 So dare I bless you, dear.

Between two bright well-heads, that
 brighten
 With every breath that blows
 Too loud to lull, too low to frighten,
 But fain to rock, the rose,
 Your feet stand fast, your lit smiles
 lighten,
 That might rear flowers from snows.

You came when winds unleashed were
 snarling
 Behind the frost-bound hours,
 A snow-bird sturdier than the star-
 ling,
 A storm-bird fledged for showers,
 That spring might smile to find you
 darling,
 First-born of all the flowers.

Could love make worthy things of
worthless,

My song were worth an ear:
Its note should make the days most
mirthless

The merriest of the year,
And wake to birth all buds yet birth-
less,

To keep your birthday, dear.

But where your birthday brightens
heaven

No need has earth, God knows,
Of light or warmth to melt or leaven
The frost or fog that glows
With sevenfold heavenly lights of seven
Sweet springs that cleave the snows.

Could love make worthy music of you,
And match my Master's powers,
Had even my love less heart to love
you,

A better song were ours;
With all the rhymes like stars above
you,
And all the words like flowers.

SEPT. 30, 1880.

A PARTING SONG.

(To a friend leaving England for a year's
residence in Australia.)

THESE winds and suns of spring,
That warm with breath and wing
The trembling sleep of earth, till half
awake

She laughs and blushes ere her slum-
ber break,

For all good gifts they bring
Require one better thing,
For all the loans of joy they lend us,
borrow

One sharper dole of sorrow,
To sunder soon by half a world of sea
Her son from England, and my friend
from me.

Nor hope nor love nor fear
May speed or stay one year,

Nor song nor prayer may bid, as mine
would fain.

The seasons perish and be born again,
Restoring all we lend,

Reluctant, of a friend, —
The voice, the hand, the presence, and
the sight,

That lend their life and light
To present gladness and heart-strength
ening cheer.

Now lent again for one reluctant year.

So much we lend indeed,
Perforce, by force of need,
So much we must; even these things
and no more,

The far sea sundering and the sundered
shore

A world apart from ours,
So much the imperious hours;
Exact, and spare not; but no more
than these

All earth and all her seas
From thought and faith of trust and
truth can borrow,

Not memory from desire, nor hope
from sorrow.

Through bright and dark and bright
Returns of day and night

I bid the swift year speed, and change
and give

His breath of life to make the next
year live

With sunnier suns for us,
A life more prosperous,

And laugh with flowers more fragrant
that shall see

A merrier March for me,
A rosier-girdled race of night with
day,

A goodlier April, and a tenderer May.

For him the inverted year
Shall mark our seasons here
With alien alternation, and revive
This withered winter, slaying the spring
alive

With darts more sharply drawn
As nearer draws the dawn,
In heaven transfigured over earth trans-
formed,

And with our winters warmed

And wasted with our summers, till the
beams
Rise on his face that rose on Dante's
dreams.

Till fourfold morning rise
Of star-shine on his eyes,
Dawn of the spheres that brand steep
heaven across
At height of night with semblance of a
cross

Whose grace and ghostly glory
Poured heaven on purgatory,
Seeing with their flamelets risen all
heaven grow glad
For love thereof it had
And lovely joy of loving; so may
these
Make bright with welcome now their
southern seas.

O happy stars, whose mirth
The saddest soul on earth
That ever soared and sang, found
strong to bless,
Lightening his life's harsh load of heavi-
ness

With comfort sown like seed
In dreams though not in deed,
On sprinkled wastes of darkling thought
divine!

Let all your lights now shine
With all as glorious gladness on his
eyes
For whom indeed, and not in dream,
they rise.

As those great twins of air
Hailed once with old-world prayer
Of all folk alway faring forth by sea,
So now may these for grace and guid-
ance be,

To guard his sail, and bring
Again to brighten spring
The face we look for, and the hand we
lack
Still, till they light him back,
As welcome as to first discovering eyes
Their light rose ever, soon on his to
rise.

As parting now he goes
From snow-time back to snows,

So back to spring from summer may
next year
Restore him, and our hearts receive
him here, —

The best good gift that spring
Had ever grace to bring
At fortune's happiest hour of star-blest
birth,

Back to love's home-bright earth,
To eyes with eyes that commune, hand
with hand,

And the old warm bosom of all our
mother-land.

Earth and sea-wind and sea
And stars and sunlight be
Alike all prosperous for him, and all
hours

Have all one heart, and all that heart
as ours.

All things as good as strange,
Crown all the seasons' change
With changing flower and compensat-
ing fruit

From one year's ripening root;
Till next year bring us, roused at
spring's recall,

A heartier flower and goodlier fruit
than all

MARCH 26, 1880.

BY THE NORTH SEA.

I.

I.

A LAND that is lonelier than ruin;
A sea that is stranger than death;
Far fields that a rose never blew
in,

Wan waste where the winds lack
breath;

Waste endless and boundless, and
flowerless

But of marsh-blossoms fruitless as
free;

Where earth lies exhausted, as power-
less

To strive with the sea.

2.

Far flickers the flight of the swallows,
 Far flutters the weft of the grass
 Spun dense over desolate hollows,
 More pale than the clouds as they
 pass;
 Thick woven as the web of a witch is
 Round the heart of a thrall that hath
 sinned,
 Whose youth and the wrecks of its
 riches
 Are waifs on the wind.

3.

The pastures are herdless and sheep-
 less,
 No pasture or shelter for herds.
 The wind is relentless and sleepless,
 And restless and songless the birds;
 Their cries from afar fall breathless,
 Their wings are as lightnings that
 flee;
 For the land has two lords that are
 deathless,—
 Death's self, and the sea.

4.

These twain, as a king with his fellow,
 Hold converse of desolate speech;
 And her waters are haggard and yellow
 And crass with the scurf of the beach;
 And his garments are gray as the hoary
 Wan sky where the day lies dim;
 And his power is to her, and his glory,
 As hers unto him.

5.

In the pride of his power she rejoices,
 In her glory he glows and is glad:
 In her darkness the sound of his voice
 is,
 With his breath she dilates, and is
 mad:
 "If thou slay me, O death, and outlive
 me,
 Yet thy love hath fulfilled me of
 thee."
 "Shall I give thee not back if thou give
 me,
 O sister, O sea?"

6.

And year upon year dawns living,
 And age upon age drops dead:
 And his hand is not weary of giving,
 And the thirst of her heart is not
 fed:
 And the hunger that moans in her pas-
 sion,
 And the rage in her hunger that
 roars,
 As a wolf's that the winter lays lash on,
 Still calls and implores.

7.

Her walls have no granite for girder,
 No fortalice fronting her stands;
 But reefs the bloodguiltiest of murder
 Are less than the banks of her sands.
 These number their slain by the thou-
 sand;
 For the ship hath no surety to be,
 When the bank is abreast of her bows,
 and
 Aflush with the sea.

8.

No surety to stand, and no shelter
 To dawn out of darkness but one,
 Out of waters that hurtle and welter,
 No succor to dawn with the sun
 But a rest from the wind as it passes,
 Where, hardly redeemed from the
 waves,
 Lie thick as the blades of the grasses
 The dead in their graves.

9.

A multitude noteless of numbers,
 As wild weeds cast on an heap.
 And sounder than sleep are their slum-
 bers,
 And softer than song is their sleep;
 And sweeter than all things, and stran-
 ger
 The sense, if perchance it may be,
 That the wind is divested of danger,
 And scatheless the sea;

10.

That the roar of the banks they breasted
 Is hurtless as bellowing of herds,

And the strength of his wings that invested

The wind, as the strength of a bird's :
As the sea-mew's might or the swallow's

That cry to him back if he cries,
As over the graves and their hollows
Days darken and rise.

11.

As the souls of the dead men disburdened

And clean of the sins that they sinned,
With a lovelier than man's life guerdoned,

And delight as a wave's in the wind,
And delight as the wind's in the billow,
Birds pass, and deride with their glee
The flesh that has dust for its pillow
As wrecks have the sea.

12.

When the ways of the sun wax dimmer,

Wings flash through the dusk like beams ;

As the clouds in the lit sky glimmer,
The bird in the graveyard gleams ;

As the cloud at its wing's edge whitens
When the clarions of sunrise are heard,

The graves that the bird's note brightens

Grow bright for the bird.

13.

As the waves of the numberless waters
That the wind cannot number who guides,

Are the sons of the shore and the daughters

Here lulled by the chime of the tides ;

And here in the press of them standing
We know not if these or if we

Live truest, — or anchored to landing,
Or drifted to sea.

14.

In the valley he named of decision,
No denser were multitudes met

When the soul of the seer in her vision
Saw nations for doom of them set ;
Saw darkness in dawn, and the splendour

Of judgment, the sword and the rod.
But the doom here of death is more tender,

And gentler the god.

15.

And gentler the wind from the dreary
Sea-banks by the waves overlapped,
Being weary, speaks peace to the weary,
From slopes that the tide-stream hath sapped ;

And sweeter than all that we call so
The seal of their slumber shall be
Till the graves that embosom them also
Be sapped of the sea.

II.

1.

For the heart of the waters is cruel,
And the kisses are dire of their lips,

And their waves are as fire is to fuel
To the strength of the seafaring ships,

Though the sea's eye gleam as a jewel
To the sun's eye back as he dips.

2.

Though the sun's eye flash to the sea's
Live light of delight and of laughter,

And her lips breathe back to the breeze
The kiss that the wind's lips wait her

From the sun that subsides, and sees
No gleam of the storm's dawn after

3.

And the wastes of the wild sea-marches
Where the borderers are matched in their might —

Bleak fens that the sun's weight parches,
Dense waves that reject his light —
Change under the change-colored arches

Of changeless morning and night.

4.

The waves are as ranks enrolled
 Too close for the storm to sever :
 The fens lie naked and cold,
 But their heart fails utterly never :
 The lists are set from of old,
 And the warfare endureth forever.

III.

I.

Miles and miles and miles of desolation !
 Leagues on leagues on leagues without a change !
 Sign or token of some eldest nation
 Here would make the strange land
 not so strange.
 Time-forgotten, yea since time's creation,
 Seem these borders where the sea-birds range.

2.

Slowly, gladly, full of peace and wonder
 Grows his heart who journeys here alone :
 Earth and all its thoughts of earth
 sink under
 Deep as deep in water sinks a stone ;
 Hardly knows it if the rollers thunder,
 Hardly whence the lonely wind is blown.

3.

Tall the plumage of the rush-flower
 tosses ;
 Sharp and soft in many a curve and line,
 Gleam and glow the sea-colored marsh-mosses,
 Salt and splendid from the circling brine ;
 Streak on streak of glimmering sea-shine crosses
 All the land sea-saturate as with wine.

4.

Far, and far between, in divers orders,
 Clear gray steeples cleave the low gray sky ;
 Fast and firm as time-unshaken warders,
 Hearts made sure by faith, by hope made high.
 These alone in all the wild sea-borders
 Fear no blast of days and nights that die.

5.

All the land is like as one man's face is,
 Pale and troubled still with change of cares.
 Doubt and death pervade her clouded spaces ;
 Strength and length of life and peace are theirs, —
 Theirs alone amid these weary places,
 Seeing not how the wild world frets and fares.

6.

Firm and fast where all is cloud that changes,
 Cloud-clogged sunlight, cloud by sunlight thinned,
 Stern and sweet, above the sand-hill ranges
 Watch the towers and tombs of men that sinned
 Once, now calm as earth, whose only change is
 Wind, and light, and wind, and cloud, and wind.

7.

Out and in and out the sharp straits wander,
 In and out and in the wild way strives,
 Starred and paved and lined with flowers that squander
 Gold as golden as the gold of hives,
 Salt and moist and multifarious ; but yonder,
 See, what sign of life or death survives ?

8.

Seen then only when the songs of olden
 Harps were young, whose echoes yet
 endure,
 Hymned of Homer when his years
 were golden,
 Known of only when the world was
 pure,
 Here is Hades, manifest, beholden,
 Surely, surely here, if aught be sure!

9.

Where the border-line was crossed,
 that, sundering
 Death from life, keeps weariness from
 rest,
 None can tell, who fares here forward
 wondering;
 None may doubt but here might end
 his quest.
 Here life's lightning joys and woes
 once thundering
 Sea-like round him cease like storm
 suppressed.

10.

Here the wise wave-wandering stead-
 fast-hearted
 Guest of many a lord, of many a
 land,
 Saw the shape or shade of years de-
 parted,
 Saw the semblance risen and hard at
 hand,
 Saw the mother long from love's reach
 parted,
 Anticleia, like a statue stand.

11.

Statue? nay, nor tissued image woven
 Fair on hangings in his father's hall;
 Nay, too fast her faith of heart was
 proven,
 Far too firm her loveliest love of all;
 Love wherethrough the loving heart
 was cloven,
 Love that hears not when the loud
 Fates call.

12.

Love that lives and stands up re-created
 Then when life has ebbed and an-
 guish fled;
 Love more strong than death or all
 things fated,
 Child's and mother's, lit by love and
 led;
 Love that found what life so long
 awaited
 Here, when life came down among
 the dead.

13.

Here, where never came alive another,
 Came her son across the sundering
 tide
 Crossed before by many a warrior
 brother
 Once that warred on Ilion at his side;
 Here spread forth vain hands to clasp
 the mother
 Dead, that sorrowing for his love's
 sake died.

14.

Parted, though by narrowest of divi-
 sions,
 Clasp he might not, only might im-
 plore,
 Sundered yet by bitterest of derisions,
 Son, and mother from the son she
 bore —
 Here? But all dispeopled here of vis-
 ions
 Lies, forlorn of shadows even, the
 shore.

15.

All too sweet such men's Hellenic
 speech is,
 All too fain they lived of light to see,
 Once to see the darkness of these
 beaches,
 Once to sing this Hades found of
 me,
 Ghostless, all its gulfs and creeks and
 reaches,
 Sky, and shore, and cloud, and waste,
 and sea.

IV.

1.

But aloft and afront of me faring
 Far forward as folk in a dream
 That strive, between doubting and dar-
 ing,
 Right on till the goal for them gleam,
 Full forth till their goal on them
 lighten,
 The harbor where fain they would
 be,
 What headlands there darken and
 brighten?
 What change in the sea?

2.

What houses and woodlands that nes-
 tle
 Safe inland to lee of the hill
 As it slopes from the headlands that
 wrestle
 And succumb to the strong sea's
 will?
 Truce is not, nor respite, nor pity;
 For the battle is waged not of hands,
 Where over the grave of a city
 The ghost of it stands.

3.

Where the wings of the sea-wind
 slacken,
 Green lawns to the landward thrive,
 Fields brighten and pine-woods black-
 en,
 And the heat in their heart is alive;
 They blossom and warble and mur-
 mur,
 For the sense of their spirit is free:
 But harder to shoreward and firmer
 The grasp of the sea.

4.

Like ashes the low cliffs crumble,
 The banks drop down into dust,
 The heights of the hills are made hum-
 ble,
 As a reed's is the strength of their
 trust;

As a city's that armies environ,
 The strength of their stay is of sand;
 But the grasp of the sea is as iron,
 Laid hard on the land.

5.

A land that is thirstier than ruin;
 A sea that is hungrier than death;
 Heaped hills that a tree never grew in;
 Wide sands where the wave draws
 breath;
 All solace is here for the spirit
 That ever forever may be
 For the soul of thy son to inherit,
 My mother, my sea.

6.

O delight of the headlands and beaches!
 O desire of the wind on the wold,
 More glad than a man's when it reaches
 That end which it sought from of
 old,
 And the palm of possession is dreary
 To the sense that in search of it
 sinned;
 But nor satisfied ever nor weary
 Is ever the wind.

7.

The delight that he takes but in living
 Is more than of all things that live;
 For the world that has all things for
 giving
 Has nothing so goodly to give:
 But more than delight his desire is,
 For the goal where his pinions would
 be
 Is immortal as air or as fire is,
 Immense as the sea.

8.

Though hence come the moan that he
 borrows
 From darkness and depths of the
 night,
 Though hence be the spring of his
 sorrows,
 Hence too is the joy of his might,—
 The delight that his doom is forever
 To seek, and desire, and rejoice,
 And the sense that eternity never
 Shall silence his voice;

9.

That satiety never may stifle,
 Nor weariness ever estrange,
 Nor time be so strong as to rife,
 Nor change be so great as to change
 His gift that renews in the giving,
 The joy that exalts him to be
 Alone of all elements living
 The lord of the sea.

10.

What is fire, that its flame should consume her?
 More fierce than all fires are her waves.
 What is earth, that its gulfs should entomb her?
 More deep are her own than their graves.
 Life shrinks from his pinions that cover
 The darkness by thunders bedinned;
 But she knows him, her lord and her lover,
 The godhead of wind.

11.

For a season his wings are about her,
 His breath on her lips for a space;
 Such rapture he wins not without her
 In the width of his world-wide race.
 Though the forests bow down, and the mountains
 Wax dark, and the tribes of them flee,
 His delight is more deep in the fountains
 And springs of the sea.

12.

There are those too of mortals that love him,
 There are souls that desire and require,
 Be the glories of midnight above him,
 Or beneath him the daysprings of fire;
 And their hearts are as harps that approve him
 And praise him as chords of a lyre
 That were fain with their music to move him
 To meet their desire.

13.

To descend through the darkness to grace them,
 Till darkness were lovelier than light:
 To encompass and grasp and embrace them,
 Till their weakness were one with his might;
 With the strength of his wings to caress them,
 With the blast of his breath to set free;
 With the mouths of his thunders to bless them
 For sons of the sea.

14.

For these have the toil and the guerdon
 That the wind has eternally: these
 Have part in the boon and the burden
 Of the sleepless, unsatisfied breeze,
 That finds not, but seeking rejoices
 That possession can work him no wrong;
 And the voice at the heart of their voice is
 The sense of his song.

15.

For the wind's is their doom and their blessing;
 To desire, and have always above
 A possession beyond their possessing,
 A love beyond reach of their love.
 Green earth has her sons and her daughters,
 And these have their guerdons; but we
 Are the wind's, and the sun's, and the water's,
 Elect of the sea.

V.

I.

For the sea too seeks and rejoices,
 Gains and loses and gains,
 And the joy of her heart's own choice is
 As ours, and as ours are her pains:

As the thoughts of our hearts are her
voices,
And as hers is the pulse of our
veins.

2.

Her fields that know not of dearth,
Nor lie for their fruit's sake fallow,
Laugh large in the depth of their mirth;
But inshore here in the shallow,
Embroiled with encumbrance of earth,
Their skirts are turbid and yellow.

3.

The grime of her greed is upon her,
The sign of her deed is her soil;
As the earth's is her own dishonor,
And corruption the crown of her
toil:

She hath spoiled and devoured, and
her honour

Is this, to be shamed by her spoil.

4.

But afar where pollution is none,
Nor ensign of strife nor endeavor,
Where her heart and the sun's are one,
And the soil of her sin comes never,
She is pure as the wind and the sun,
And her sweetness endureth forever.

VI.

I.

Death, and change, and darkness ever-
lasting,

Deaf that hears not what the day-
star saith,

Blind past all remembrance and fore-
casting,

Dead past memory that it once drew
breath,—

These, above the washing tides and
wasting,

Reign, and rule this land of utter
death.

2.

Change of change, darkness of dark-
ness, hidden,

Very death of very death, begun

When none knows,— the knowledge is
forbidden,—

Self-begotten, self-proceeding, one
Born, not made — abhorred, unchained,
unchidden,

Night stands here defiant of the sun.

3.

Change of change, and death of death
begotten,

Darkness born of darkness, one and
three,

Ghostly godhead of a world forgotten,
Crowned with heaven, enthroned on

land and sea,

Here, where earth with dead men's
bones is rotten,

God of Time, thy likeness worships
thee.

4.

Lo! thy likeness of thy desolation,
Shape and figure of thy might, O
Lord,

Formless form, incarnate miscreation,
Served of all things living, and ab-
horred;

Earth herself is here thine incarnation,
Time, of all things born on earth
adored.

5.

All that worship thee are fearful of
thee;

No man may not worship thee for
fear:

Prayers nor curses prove not nor dis-
prove thee,

Move nor change thee with our
change of cheer:

All at last, though all abhorred thee,
love thee,

God, the sceptre of whose throne is
here.

6.

Here thy throne and sceptre of thy
station,

Here the palace paven for thy feet;

Here thy sign from nation unto nation
Passed as watchword for thy guards
to greet,—

Guards that go before thine exaltation,
Ages, clothed with bitter years and
sweet.

7.

Here, where sharp the sea-bird shrills
 his ditty,
 Flickering flame-wise through the
 clear live calm,
 Rose triumphal, crowning all a city,
 Roofs exalted once with prayer and
 psalm,
 Built of holy hands for holy pity,
 Frank and fruitful as a sheltering
 palm.

8.

Church and hospice wrought in fault-
 less fashion,
 Hall and chancel bounteous and sub-
 lime,
 Wide and sweet and glorious as com-
 passion,
 Filled and thrilled with force of
 choral chime,
 Filled with spirit of prayer and thrilled
 with passion,
 Hailed a god more merciful than
 Time.

9.

Ah! less mighty, less than Time pre-
 vailing,
 Shrunk, expelled, made nothing at
 his nod,
 Less than clouds across the sea-line
 sailing,
 Lies he, stricken by his master's rod.
 "Where is man?" the cloister mur-
 murs wailing;
 Back the mute shrine thunders —
 "Where is God?"

10.

Here is all the end of all his glory, —
 Dust, and grass, and barren silent
 stones.
 Dead, like him, one hollow tower and
 hoary
 Naked in the sea-wind stands and
 moans,
 Filled and thrilled with its perpetual
 story.
 Here, where earth is dense with dead
 men's bones.

11.

Low and loud and long, a voice for-
 ever,
 Sounds the wind's clear story like a
 song.
 Tomb from tomb the waves devouring
 sever,
 Dust from dust as years relapse
 along;
 Graves where men made sure to rest,
 and never
 Lie dismantled by the seasons' wrong.

12.

Now displaced, devoured and dese-
 crated,
 Now by Time's hands darkly dis-
 interred,
 These poor dead that sleeping here
 awaited
 Long the archangel's re-creating
 word,
 Closed about with roofs and walls
 high-gated
 Till the blast of judgment should be
 heard.

13.

Naked, shamed, cast out of consecra-
 tion,
 Corpse and coffin, yea, the very
 graves,
 Scoffed at, scattered, shaken from
 their station,
 Spurned and scourged of wind and
 sea like slaves,
 Desolate beyond man's desolation,
 Shrink and sink into the waste of
 waves.

14.

Tombs, with bare white piteous bones
 protruded,
 Shroudless, down the loose collaps-
 ing banks,
 Crumble, from their constant place
 detrued,
 That the sea devours and gives not
 thanks.
 Graves where hope and prayer and
 sorrow brooded
 Gape and slide and perish, ranks on
 ranks.

15.

Rows on rows, and line by line they
crumble, —

They that thought for all time
through to be.

Scarce a stone whereon a child might
stumble,

Breaks the grim field paced alone of
me.

Earth, and man, and all their gods wax
humble,

Here, where Time brings pasture to
the sea.

VII.

1.

But afar on the headland exalted,

But beyond in the curl of the bay,
From the depth of his dome deep-vault-
ed,

Our father is lord of the day.

Our father and lord that we follow,

For deathless and ageless is he ;

And his robe is the whole sky's hol-
low,

His sandal the sea.

2.

Where the horn of the headland is
sharper,

And her green floor glitters with fire,
The sea has the sun for a harper,

The sun has the sea for a lyre.

The waves are a pavement of amber,

By the feet of the sea-winds trod,

To receive in a god's presence-chamber
Our father, the god.

3.

Time, haggard and changeful and
hoary,

Is master and god of the land :

But the air is fulfilled of the glory

That is shed from our lord's right
hand.

O father of all of us ever,

All glory be only to thee

From heaven, that is void of thee
never,
And earth, and the sea.

4.

O Sun ! whereof all is beholden,

Behold now the shadow of this death

This place of the sepulchres, olden

And emptied and vain as a breath,

The bloom of the bountiful heather

Laughs broadly beyond in thy light,

As dawn, with her glories to gather,

At darkness and night.

5.

Though the gods of the night lie rot-
ten,

And their honor be taken away,

And the noise of their names forgotten,

Thou, Lord, art god of the day.

Thou art father, and saviour, and spirit,

O Sun, of the soul that is free,

And hath grace of thy grace to inherit

Thine earth and thy sea.

6.

The hills and the sands and the beaches,

The waters adrift and afar,

The banks and the creeks and the
reaches,

How glad of thee all these are !

The flowers, overflowing, overcrowded,

Are drunk with the mad wind's
mirth :

The delight of thy coming unclouded

Makes music of earth.

7.

I, last least voice of her voices,

Give thanks that were mute in me
long

To the soul in my soul that rejoices

For the song that is over my song.

Time gives what he gains for the giv-
ing,

Or takes for his tribute of me ;

My dreams to the wind ever-living,

My song to the sea.

SONNETS.

TO WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

THE larks are loud above our leagues
of whin,
Now the sun's perfume fills their glorious gold
With odor like the color · all the wold
Is only light and song and wind wherein
These twain are blent in one with shining din.
And now your gift, a giver's kingly-souled,
Dear old fast friend whose honors grow not old,
Bids memory's note as loud and sweet begin.
Though all but we from life be now gone forth
Of that bright household in our joyous north
Where I, scarce clear of boyhood just at end,
First met your hand ; yet under life's clear dome
Now seventy strenuous years have crowned my friend,
Shines no less bright his full-sheaved harvest-home.

APRIL 20, 1882.

ON THE DEATHS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND GEORGE ELIOT.

Two souls diverse out of our human sight
Pass, followed one with love and each with wonder :
The stormy sophist with his mouth of thunder,
Clothed with loud words and mantled in the might

Of darkness and magnificence of night ;
And one whose eye could smite the night in sunder,
Searching if light or no light were thereunder,
And found in love of loving-kindness light.
Duty divine and Thought with eyes of fire
Still following Righteousness with deep desire
Shone sole and stern before her and above
Sure stars and sole to steer by ; but more sweet
Shone lower the loveliest lamp for earthly feet, —
The light of little children, and their love.

AFTER LOOKING INTO CARLYLE'S REMINISCENCES.

I.

THREE men lived yet when this dead man was young,
Whose names and words endure forever : one
Whose eyes grew dim with straining toward the sun,
And his wings weakened, and his angel's tongue
Lost half the sweetest song was ever sung,
But like the strain half uttered, earth hears none,
Nor shall man hear till all men's songs are done ;
One whose clear spirit like an eagle hung

Between the mountains hallowed by his
 his love
 And the sky stainless as his soul above;
 And one, the sweetest heart that ever
 spake
 The brightest words wherein sweet wis-
 dom smiled.
 These deathless names by this dead
 snake defiled
 Bid memory spit upon him for their
 sake.

II.

Sweet heart, forgive me for thine own
 sweet sake,
 Whose kind blithe soul such seas of
 sorrow swam,
 And for my love's sake, powerless as
 I am
 For love to praise thee, or like thee to
 make
 Music of mirth where hearts less pure
 would break,
 Less pure than thine, our life-un-
 spotted Lamb.
 Things hatefullest thou hadst not
 heart to damn,
 Nor wouldst have set thine heel on this
 dead snake.
 Let worms consume its memory with
 its tongue,
 The fang that stabbed fair Truth, the
 lip that stung
 Men's memories uncorroded with its
 breath.
 Forgive me, that with bitter words like
 his
 I mix the gentlest English name that is,
 The tenderest held of all that know
 not death.

A LAST LOOK.

SICK of self-love, Malvolio, like an
 owl
 That hoots the sun re-risen where
 starlight sank,
 With German garters crossed athwart
 thy frank
 Stout Scottish legs, men watched thee
 snarl and scowl,

And boys responsive with reverberate
 howl
 Shrilled, hearing how to thee the
 springtime stank,
 And as thine own soul all the world
 smelt rank,
 And as thine own thoughts Liberty
 seemed foul.
 Now, for all ill thoughts nursed and ill
 words given
 Not all condemned, not utterly for
 given,
 Son of the storm and darkness, pass
 in peace.
 Peace upon earth thou knewest not
 now, being dead,
 Rest, with nor curse nor blessing on
 thine head,
 Where high-strung hate and strenu-
 ous envy cease.

DICKENS.

CHIEF in thy generation born of men
 Whom English praise acclaimed as
 English-born,
 With eyes that matched the world
 wide eyes of morn
 For gleam of tears or laughter, tender-
 est then
 When thoughts of children warmed
 their light, or when
 Reverence of age with love and
 labour worn,
 Or godlike pity fired with godlike
 scorn,
 Shot through them flame that winged
 thy swift live pen:
 Where stars and suns that we behold
 not burn,
 Higher even than here, though high-
 est was here thy place,
 Love sees thy spirit laugh and
 speak and shine
 With Shakespeare, and the soft bright
 soul of Sterne,
 And Fielding's kindest might, and
 Goldsmith's grace;
 Scarce one more loved or worthier
 love than thine.

ON LAMB'S SPECIMENS OF
DRAMATIC POETS.

I.

IF all the flowers of all the fields on
earth
By wonder-working summer were
made one,
Its fragrance were not sweeter in the
sun,
Its treasure-house of leaves were not
more worth
Than those wherefrom thy light of mus-
ing mirth
Shone, till each leaf whereon thy pen
would run
Breathed life, and all its breath was
benison.
Beloved beyond all names of English
birth,
More dear than mightier memories!
gentlest name
That ever clothed itself with flower-
sweet fame,
Or linked itself with loftiest names of
old
By right and might of loving; I, that
am
Less than the least of those within thy
fold,
Give only thanks for them to thee,
Charles Lamb.

II.

So many a year had borne its own bright
bees
And slain them since thy honey-bees
were hived,
John Day, in cells of flower-sweet
verse contrived
So well with craft of moulding melo-
dies,
Thy soul perchance in amaranth fields
at ease
Thought not to hear the sound on
earth revived
Of summer music from the spring
derived
When thy song sucked the flower of
flowering trees.
But thine was not the chance of every
day:

Time, after many a darkling hour
grew sunny,
And light between the clouds ere
sunset swam,
Laughing, and kissed their darkness all
away,
When, touched and tasted and ap-
proved, thy honey
Took subtler sweetness from the
lips of Lamb.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

CROWNED, girdled, garbed, and shod
with light and fire,
Son first-born of the morning, sov-
eign star!
Soul nearest ours of all, that wert
most far,
Most far off in the abysm of time, thy
lyre
Hung highest above the dawn-enkin-
dled quire
Where all ye sang together, all that
are,
And all the starry songs behind thy
car
Rang sequence, all our souls acclaim
thee sire.

"If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters'
thoughts,"
And as with rush of hurtling chariots
The flight of all their spirits were im-
pelled
Toward one great end, thy glory —
Nay, not then,
Not yet mightst thou be praised
enough of men.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

NOR if men's tongues and angels' all in
one
Spake, might the word be said that
might speak Thee.
Streams, winds, woods, flowers, fields,
mountains, yea, the sea,
What power is in them all to praise the
sun?

His praise is this, — he can be praised
of none.

Man, woman, child, praise God for
him; but he

Exults not to be worshipped, but to
be.

He is; and, being, beholds his work
well done.

All joy, all glory, all sorrow, all strength,
all mirth,

Are his: without him, day were night
on earth.

Time knows not his from time's own
period.

All lutes, all harps, all viols, all flutes,
all lyres,

Fall dumb before him ere one string
suspIRES.

All stars are angels; but the sun is
God.

BEN JONSON.

BROAD-BASED, broad-fronted, bounte-
ous, multiform,

With many a valley impleached with
ivy and vine,

Wherein the springs of all the streams
run wine,

And many a crag full-faced against the
storm,

The mountain where thy Muse's feet
made warm

Those lawns that revelled with her
dance divine,

Shines yet with fire as it was wont
to shine

From tossing torches round the dance
a-swarm.

Nor less, high-stationed on the gray
grave heights,

High-thoughted seers with heaven's
heart-kindling lights

Hold converse: and the herd of
meaner things

Knows or by fiery scourge or fiery shaft
When wrath on thy broad brows has
risen, and laughed,

Darkening thy soul with shadow of
thunderous wings.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

AN hour ere sudden sunset fired the
west,

Arose two stars upon the pale deep
east.

The hall of heaven was clear for
night's high feast,

Yet was not yet day's fiery heart at rest
Love leapt up from his mother's burn-
ing breast

To see those warm twin lights, as
day decreased,

Wax wider, till, when all the sur-
had ceased,

As suns they shone from evening's
kindled crest.

Across them and between, a quicken-
ing fire,

Flamed Venus, laughing with appeased
desire.

Their dawn, scarce lovelier for the
gleam of tears,

Filled half the hollow shell 'twix
heaven and earth

With sound like moonlight, mingling
moan and mirth,

Which rings and glitters down the
darkling years.

PHILIP MASSINGER.

CLOUDS here and there arisen an hour
past noon

Checked our English heaven with
lengthening bars

And shadow and sound of wheel-
winged thunder-cars

Assembling strength to put forth ten-
pest soon,

When the clear still warm concord of
thy tune

Rose under skies unscared by redder
ing Mars,

Yet, like a sound of silver speech of
stars,

With full mild flame as of the mellow
ing moon.

Grave and great-hearted Massinger, the
face

High melancholy lights with lofty
grace

Than gilds the brows of revel: sad
and wise,
The spirit of thought that moved thy
deeper song,
Sorrow serene in soft calm scorn of
wrong,
Speaks patience yet from thy majes-
tic eyes.

JOHN FORD.

HEW hard the marble from the moun-
tain's heart
Where hardest night holds fast in
iron gloom
Gems brighter than an April dawn
in bloom,
That his Memnonian likeness thence
may start
Revealed, whose hand with high fune-
real art
Carved night, and chiselled shadow:
be the tomb
That speaks him famous graven with
signs of doom,
Intrenched inevitably in lines athwart,
As on some thunder-blasted Titan's
brow
His record of rebellion. Not the
day
Shall strike forth music from so
stern a chord,
Touching this marble: darkness, none
knows how,
And stars impenetrable of midnight,
may.
So looms the likeness of thy soul,
John Ford.

JOHN WEBSTER.

THUNDER: the flesh quails, and the
soul bows down.
Night: east, west, south, and north-
ward, very night.
Star upon struggling star strives into
sight,
Star after shuddering star the deep
storms drown.

The very throne of night, her very
crown,
A man lays hand on, and usurps
her right.
Song from the highest of heaven's
imperious height
Shoots, as a fire to smite some tower-
ing town.
Rage, anguish, harrowing fear, heart-
crazing crime,
Make monstrous all the murderous face
of Time
Shown in the spherul orbit of a glass
Revolving. Earth cries out from all
her graves.
Frail, on frail rafts, across wide-wallow-
ing waves,
Shapes here and there of child and
mother pass.

THOMAS DECKER.

OUT of the depths of darkling life,
where sin
Laughs piteously that sorrow should
not know
Her own ill name, nor woe be count-
ed woe;
Where hate and craft and lust make
drearier din
Than sounds through dreams that grief
holds revel in, —
What charm of joy-bells ringing,
streams that flow,
Winds that blow healing in each note
they blow,
Is this that the outer darkness hears
begin?
O sweetest heart of all thy time save
one,
Star seen for love's sake nearest to the
sun,
Hung lamplike o'er a dense and dole-
ful city,
Not Shakespeare's very spirit, howe'er
more great,
Than thine toward man was more com-
passionate,
Nor gave Christ praise from lips
more sweet with pity.

THOMAS MIDDLETON.

A WILD moon riding high from cloud to cloud,
 That sees and sees not, glimmering far beneath,
 Hell's children revel along the shuddering heath
 With dirge-like mirth and raiment like a shroud;
 A worse fair face than witchcraft's, passion-proud,
 With brows blood-flecked behind their bridal wreath,
 And lips that bade the assassin's sword find sheath
 Deep in the heart whereto love's heart was vowed;
 A game of close contentious crafts and creeds
 Played till white England bring black Spain to shame;
 A son's bright sword and brighter soul, whose deeds
 High conscience lights for mother's love and fame;
 Pure gypsy flowers, and poisonous courtly weeds:
 Such tokens and such trophies crown thy name.

THOMAS HEYWOOD.

TOM, if they loved thee best who called thee Tom,
 What else may all men call thee, seeing thus bright
 Even yet the laughing and the weeping light
 That still thy kind old eyes are kindled from?
 Small care was thine to assail and overcome
 Time and his child Oblivion: yet of right
 Thy name has part with names of lordlier might
 For English love and homely sense of home,
 Whose fragrance keeps thy small sweet bay-leaf young,

And gives it place aloft among thy peers,
 Whence many a wreath once higher strong Time has harled;
 And this thy praise is sweet on Shake-speare's tongue, —
 "O good old man! how wel' in thee appears
 The constant service of the antique world!"

JOHN MARSTON.

THE bitterness of death and bitterer scorn
 Breathes from the broad-leaved aloep-plant whence thou
 Wast fain to gather for thy bended brow
 A chaplet by no gentler forehead worn.
 Grief deep as hell, wrath hardly to be borne,
 Ploughed up thy soul till round the furrowing plough
 The strange black soil foamed, as a black-beaked prow
 Bids night-black waves foam where its track has torn.
 Too faint the phrase for thee that only saith
 Scorn bitterer than the bitterness of death
 Pervades the sullen splendor of thy soul,
 Where hate and pain make war on force and fraud,
 And all the strengths of tyrants: whence unflawed
 It keeps this noble heart of hatred whole.

GEORGE CHAPMAN.

HIGH priest of Homer, not elect in vain,
 Deep trumpets blow before thee, shawms behind
 Mix music with the rolling wheels that wind
 Slow through the laboring triumph of thy train:

Fierce history, molten in thy forging
 brain,
 Takes form and fire and fashion from
 thy mind,
 Tormented and transmuted out of
 kind:
 But howsoe'er thou shift thy strenuous
 strain,
 Like Tailor¹ smooth, like Fisher²
 swollen, and now
 Grim Yarrington³ scarce bloodier
 marked than thou,
 Then bluff as Mayne's⁴ or broad-
 mouthed Barry's⁵ glee,
 Proud still with hoar predominance of
 brow
 And beard like foam swept off the
 broad blown sea,
 Where'er thou go, men's reverence
 goes with thee.

JOHN DAY.

DAY was a full-blown flower in heaven,
 alive
 With murmuring joy of bees and
 birds a-swarm,
 When in the skies of song yet flushed
 and warm
 With music where all passion seems to
 strive
 For utterance, all things bright and
 fierce to drive
 Struggling along the splendor of the
 storm,
 Day for an hour put off his fiery
 form,
 And golden murmurs from a golden
 hive
 Across the strong bright summer wind
 were heard,
 And laughter soft as smiles from
 girls at play,
 And loud from lips of boys brow-
 bound with May.

¹ Author of *The Hog* hath lost his Pearl.² Author of *Fuimus Troes*, or the *True Trojans*.³ Author of *Two Tragedies in One*.⁴ Author of *The City Match*.⁵ Author of *Ram-Alley*, or *Merry Tricks*.

Our mightiest age let fall its gentlest
 word,
 When Song, in semblance of a sweet
 small bird,
 Lit fluttering on the light swift hand
 of Day.

JAMES SHIRLEY.

THE dusk of day's decline was hard on
 dark
 When evening trembled round thy
 glowworm lamp
 That shone across her shades and
 dewy damp,
 A small clear beacon whose benignant
 spark
 Was gracious yet for loiterers' eyes to
 mark,
 Though changed the watchword of
 our English camp
 Since the outposts rang round Mar-
 lowe's lion ramp,
 When thy steed's pace went ambling
 round Hyde Park.

And in the thickening twilight under
 thee
 Walks Davenant, pensive in the paths
 where he,
 The blithest throat that ever carolled
 love
 In music made of morning's merriest
 heart,
 Glad Suckling, stumbled from his seat
 above,
 And reeled on slippery roads of alien
 art.

THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.

SONS born of many a loyal Muse to
 Ben,
 All true-begotten, warm with wine or
 ale,
 Bright from the broad light of his
 presence, hail!
 Prince Randolph, highest his throne of
 all his men,

Being highest in spirit and heart who
 hailed him then
 King, nor might other spread so
 blithe a sail:
 Cartwright, a soul pent in with nar-
 rower pale,
 Praised of thy sire for manful might of
 pen:
 Marmion, whose verse keeps alway
 keen and fine
 The perfume of their Apollonian wine,
 Who shared with that stout sire of
 all and thee
 The exuberant chalice of his echoing
 shrine:
 Is not your praise writ broad in gold
 which he
 Inscribed, that all who praise his
 name should see?

ANONYMOUS PLAYS: "AR-
 DEN OF FEVERSHAM."

MOTHER whose womb brought forth
 our man of men,
 Mother of Shakespeare, whom all
 time acclaims
 Queen therefore, sovereign queen of
 English dames,
 Throned higher than sat thy sonless
 empress then,
 Was it thy son's young passion-guided
 pen
 Which drew, reflected from encir-
 cling flames,
 A figure marked by the earlier of thy
 names
 Wife, and from all her wedded kins-
 women
 Marked by the sign of murderess?
 Pale and great,
 Great in her grief and sin, but in her
 death
 And anguish of her penitential breath
 Greater than all her sin or sin-born
 fate,
 She stands, the holocaust of dark
 desire,
 Clothed round with song forever as
 with fire.

ANONYMOUS PLAYS.

YE too, dim watchfires of some dark-
 ling hour,
 Whose fame forlorn time saves not
 nor proclaims
 Forever, but forgetfulness defames,
 And darkness and the shadow of death
 devour,
 Lift up ye too your light, put forth your
 power,
 Let the far twilight feel your soft
 small flames,
 And smile, albeit night name not
 even their names,
 Ghost by ghost passing, flower blown
 down on flower;
 That sweet-tongued shadow, like a star's
 that passed
 Singing, and light was from its dark-
 ness cast
 To paint the face of Painting fair
 with praise:¹
 And that wherein forefigured smiles
 the pure
 Fraternal face of Wordsworth's Eli-
 dure
 Between two child-faced masks of
 merrier days.²

ANONYMOUS PLAYS.

MORE yet and more, and yet we mark
 not all:
 The Warning fain to bid fair women
 heed
 Its hard brief note of deadly doom
 and deed;³
 The verse that strewed too thick with
 flowers the hall
 Whence Nero watched his fiery festi-
 val;⁴
 That iron page wherein men's eyes
 who read
 See, bruised and marred between two
 babes that bleed,

¹ Doctor Dodypol.

² Nobody and Somebody.

³ A Warning for Fair Women.

⁴ The Tragedy of Nero.

A mad red-handed husband's martyr
 fall;¹
 The scene which crossed and streaked
 with mirth the strife
 Of Henry with his sons and witchlike
 wife;²
 And that sweet pageant of the kindly
 fiend,
 Who, seeing three friends in spirit
 and heart made one,
 Crowned with good hap the true-love
 wiles he screened
 In the pleached lanes of pleasant
 Edmonton.³

THE MANY.

I.

GREENE, garlanded with February's
 few flowers,
 Ere March came in with Marlowe's
 rapturous rage;
 Peele, from whose hand the sweet
 white locks of age
 Took the mild chaplet woven of hon-
 ored hours;
 Nash, laughing hard; Lodge, flushed
 from lyric bowers;
 And Lilly, a goldfinch in a twisted
 cage,
 Fed by some gay great lady's pettish
 page
 Till short sweet songs gush clear like
 short spring showers;
 Kid, whose grim sport still gambolled
 over graves;
 And Chettle, in whose fresh funereal
 verse
 Weeps Marian yet on Robin's wild-
 wood hearse;
 Cooke, whose light boat of song one
 soft breath saves,
 Sighed from a maiden's amorous
 mouth averse:
 Live likewise ye: Time takes not you
 for slaves.

¹ A Yorkshire Tragedy.² Look about you.³ The Merry Devil of Edmonton.

THE MANY.

II.

HAUGHTON, whose mirth gave woman
 all her will;
 Field, bright and loud with laughing
 flower and bird,
 And keen alternate notes of laud
 and gird;
 Barnes, darkening once with Borgia's
 deeds the quill
 Which tuned the passion of Partheno-
 phil;
 Blithe burly Porter, broad and bold
 of word;
 Wilkins, a voice with strenuous pity
 stirred:
 Turk Mason; Brewer, whose tongue
 drops honey still;
 Rough Rowley, handling song with
 Esau's hand;
 Light Nabbes; lean Sharpham, rank
 and raw by turns,
 But fragrant with a forethought once
 of Burns;
 Soft Davenport, sad-robed, but blithe
 and bland;
 Brome, gypsy-led across the wood-
 land ferns:
 Praise be with all, and place among
 our band.

EPILOGUE.

OUR mother, which wast twice, as his
 tory saith,
 Found first among the nations: once,
 when she
 Who bore thine ensign saw the God
 in thee
 Smite Spain, and bring forth Shake-
 speare; once, when death
 Shrank, and Rome's bloodhounds cower-
 ed, at Milton's breath:
 More than thy place, then first
 among the free;
 More than that sovereign lordship of
 the sea
 Bequeathed to Cromwell from Eliza-
 beth;

More than thy fiery guiding-star, which
Drake
Hailed, and the deep saw lit again for
Blake;
More than all deeds wrought of thy
strong right hand,—

This praise keeps most thy fame's
memorial strong,
That thou wast head of all these
streams of song,
And time bows down to thee as
Shakespeare's land.

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